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Contents

[MAY 1893

PAGE

A Gentleman of France: being the Memoirs of Gaston
de Bonne, Sieur de Marsac 1
By STANLEY J. WEYMAN. Chaps. XIII.—XV.

The Journal to Stella 30
By AUSTIN DOBSON

The Children's Hour 40
By AGNES JEKYLL

Elisbeth's Holiday 45
By DOROTHEA GERARD

The Study of Weather and of Climate 62
By ROBERT H. SCOTT

Character from Handwriting 69
By LADY MILDRED BOYNTON

At the Sign of the Ship 87
By ANDREW LANG

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'Duty, Not Happiness, is the True Object of Life.'

WHAT COMMANDS THE ADMIRATION AND HOMAGE OF MANKIND ?—CHARACTER AND STERLING HONESTY OF PURPOSE.

THE FATHER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AN INCIDENT IN HIS FIRST CANVASS.

'TELL 'IM TO CHALK HIS NAME ON THE COUNTER, AND YOUR FATHER SHALL ASK HIS CHARACTER.'

'If I were asked to account in a sentence for his great popularity, I should say it was his great urbanity, his fidelity to true Liberalism, his love of independence, and his unimpeachable character. During his first canvass (about 60 years ago), Mr. Villiers and two friends entered a small shop at Willenhall that had been left in charge of a young girl. On learning their business the damsel shouted upstairs, "Mother, here's a gentleman as is come for father's vote for Member of Parliament!" To this a voice from above made answer, "Tell 'im to chalk his name on the counter, and your FATHER SHALL ASK HIS CHARACTER." "Thank you, Ma'am," shouted the candidate; after which, turning to his companions, he said, "Book that for me. I am as certain of it as if it were already given."—*Newcastle Chronicle*.



"BOOK THAT FOR ME."

very least, if not my life itself. Heartfelt gratitude for my restoration impels me to add my testimony to already overwhelming store of the same, and in so doing I feel that I am but obeying the dictates of duty

'Gratefully yours, A CORPORAL, 19th Hussars.—26th May, 1882'

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MAY 1893.

A Gentleman of France.

*BEING THE MEMOIRS OF GASTON DE BONNE,
SIEUR DE MARSAC.*

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT ROSNY.

THE morning brought only fresh proofs of the kindness which M. de Rosny had conceived for me. Awaking early I found on a stool beside my clothes, a purse of gold containing a hundred crowns; and a youth presently entering to ask me if I lacked anything, I had at first some difficulty in recognising Simon Fleix, so sprucely was the lad dressed, in a mode resembling Maignan's. I looked at the student more than once before I addressed him by his name; and was as much surprised by the strange change I observed in him—for it was not confined to his clothes—as by anything which had happened since I entered the house. I rubbed my eyes, and asked him what he had done with his soutane.

‘Burned it, M. de Marsac,’ he answered briefly.

I saw that he had burned much, metaphorically speaking, besides his soutane. He was less pale, less lank, less wobegone than formerly, and went more briskly. He had lost the air of crack-brained disorder which had distinguished him, and was smart, sedate, and stooped less. Only the odd sparkle remained in his eyes, and bore witness to the same nervous, eager spirit within.

‘What are you going to do, then, Simon?’ I asked, noting these changes curiously.

‘I am a soldier,’ he answered, ‘and follow M. de Marsac.’

I laughed. ‘You have chosen a poor service, I am afraid,’ I said, beginning to rise; ‘and one, too, Simon, in which it is possible you may be killed. I thought that would not suit you,’ I continued, to see what he would say. But he answered nothing, and I looked at him in great surprise. ‘You have made up your mind, then, at last?’ I said.

‘Perfectly,’ he answered.

‘And solved all your doubts?’

‘I have no doubts.’

‘You are a Huguenot?’

‘That is the only true and pure religion,’ he replied gravely. And with apparent sincerity and devotion he repeated Beza’s Confession of Faith.

This filled me with profound astonishment, but I said no more at the time, though I had my doubts. I waited until I was alone with M. de Rosny, and then I unbosomed myself on the matter; expressing my surprise at the suddenness of the conversion, and at such a man, as I had found the student to be, stating his views so firmly and steadfastly, and with so little excitement. Observing that M. de Rosny smiled but answered nothing, I explained myself farther.

‘I am surprised,’ I said, ‘because I have always heard it maintained that clerical men, becoming lost in the mazes of theology, seldom find any sure footing; that not one in a hundred returns to his old faith, or finds grace to accept a new one. I am speaking only of such, of course, as I believe this lad to be—eager, excitable brains, learning much, and without judgment to digest what they learn.’

‘Of such I also believe it to be true,’ M. de Rosny answered, still smiling. ‘But even on them a little influence, applied at the right moment, has much effect, M. de Marsac.’

‘I allow that,’ I said. ‘But my mother, of whom I have spoken to you, saw much of this youth. His fidelity to her was beyond praise. Yet her faith, though grounded on a rock, had no weight with him.’

M. de Rosny shook his head, still smiling.

‘It is not our mothers who convert us,’ he said.

‘What!’ I cried, my eyes opened. ‘Do you mean—do you mean that Mademoiselle has done this?’

'I fancy so,' he answered, nodding. 'I think my lady cast her spell over him by the way. The lad left Blois with her, if what you say be true, without faith in the world. He came to my hands two days later the stoutest of Huguenots. It is not hard to read this riddle.'

'Such conversions are seldom lasting,' I said.

He looked at me queerly; and, the smile still hovering about his lips, answered 'Tush, man! Why so serious? Theodore Beza himself could not look drier. The lad is in earnest, and there is no harm done.'

And, Heaven knows, I was in no mood to suspect harm; nor inclined just then to look at the dark side of things. It may be conceived how delightful it was to me to be received as an equal and honoured guest by a man, even then famous, and now so grown in reputation as to overshadow all Frenchmen save his master; how pleasant to enjoy the comforts and amiabilities of home, from which I had been long estranged; to pour my mother's story into Madame's ears and find comfort in her sympathy; to feel myself, in fine, once more a gentleman with an acknowledged place in the world. Our days were spent in hunting, or excursions of some kind, our evenings in long conversations, which impressed me with an ever-growing respect for my lord's powers.

For there seemed to be no end either to his knowledge of France, or to the plans for its development, which even then filled his brain, and have since turned wildernesses into fruitful lands, and squalid towns into great cities. Grave and formal, he could yet unbend; the most sagacious of counsellors, he was a soldier also, and loved the seclusion in which we lived the more that it was not devoid of danger; the neighbouring towns being devoted to the League, and the general disorder alone making it possible for him to lie unsuspected in his own house.

One thing only rendered my ease and comfort imperfect, and that was the attitude which Mademoiselle de la Vire assumed towards me. Of her gratitude in the first blush of the thing I felt no doubt, for not only had she thanked me very prettily, though with reserve, on the evening of my arrival, but the warmth of M. de Rosny's kindness left me no choice, save to believe that she had given him an exaggerated idea of my merits and services. I asked no more than this. Such good offices left me nothing to expect or desire; my age and ill-fortune placing me at so great a disadvantage that, far from dreaming of friendship or intimacy with her, I did not even assume the equality in our daily intercourse

to which my birth, taken by itself, entitled me. Knowing that I must appear in her eyes old, poor, and ill-dressed, and satisfied with having asserted my conduct and honour, I was careful not to trespass on her gratitude ; and while forward in such courtesies as could not weary her, I avoided with equal care every appearance of pursuing her, or inflicting my company upon her. I addressed her formally and upon formal topics only, such, I mean, as we shared with the rest of our company ; and reminded myself often that though we now met in the same house and at the same table, she was still the Mademoiselle de la Vire who had borne herself so loftily in the King of Navarre's ante-chamber. This I did, not out of pique or wounded pride, which I no more, God knows, harboured against her than against a bird ; but that I might not in my new prosperity forget the light in which such a woman, young, spoiled, and beautiful, must still regard me.

Keeping to this inoffensive posture, I was the more hurt when I found her gratitude fade with the hour. After the first two days, during which I remarked that she was very silent, seldom speaking to me or looking at me, she resumed much of her old air of disdain. For that I cared little ; but she presently went farther, and began to rake up the incidents which had happened at St. Jean d'Angely, and in which I had taken part. She continually adverted to my poverty while there, to the odd figure I had cut, and the many jests her friends had made at my expense. She seemed to take a pleasure positively savage in these, gibing at me sometimes so bitterly as to shame and pain me, and bring the colour to Madame de Rosny's cheeks.

To the time we had spent together, on the other hand, she never or rarely referred. One afternoon, however, a week after my arrival at Rosny, I found her sitting alone in the parlour. I had not known she was there, and I was for withdrawing at once with a bow and a muttered apology. But she stopped me with an angry gesture. 'I do not bite,' she said, rising from her stool and meeting my eyes, a red spot in each cheek. 'Why do you look at me like that? Do you know, M. de Marsac, that I have no patience with you.' And she stamped her foot on the floor.

'But, mademoiselle,' I stammered humbly, wondering what in the world she meant, 'what have I done ?'

'Done?' she repeated angrily. 'Done? It is not what you have done, it is what you are. I have no patience with you. Why are you so dull, sir? Why are you so dowdy? Why do you go about with your doublet awry, and your hair lank? Why do

you speak to Maignan as if he were a gentleman? Why do you look always solemn and polite, and as if all the world were a *préche*? Why? Why? Why, I say?

She stopped from sheer lack of breath, leaving me as much astonished as ever in my life. She looked so beautiful in her fury and fierceness too, that I could only stare at her and wonder dumbly what it all meant.

‘Well!’ she cried impatiently, after bearing this as long as she could, ‘have you not a word to say for yourself? Have you no tongue? Have you no will of your own at all, M. de Marsac?’

‘But, mademoiselle,’ I began, trying to explain.

‘Chut!’ she exclaimed, cutting me short before I could get farther, as the way of women is. And then she added, in a changed tone, and very abruptly, ‘You have a velvet knot of mine, sir. Give it me.’

‘It is in my room,’ I answered, astonished beyond measure at this sudden change of subject, and equally sudden demand.

‘Then fetch it, sir, if you please,’ she replied, her eyes flashing afresh. ‘Fetch it. Fetch it, I say! It has served its turn, and I prefer to have it. Who knows but that some day you may be showing it for a love-knot?’

‘Mademoiselle!’ I cried, hotly. And I think that for the moment I was as angry as she was.

‘Still, I prefer to have it,’ she answered sullenly, casting down her eyes.

I was so much enraged, I went without a word and fetched it, and, bringing it to her where she stood, in the same place, put it in her hands. When she saw it some recollection, I fancy, of the day when she had traced the cry for help on it, came to her in her anger; for she took it from me with all her bearing altered. She trembled, and held it for a moment in her hands, as if she did not know what to do with it. She was thinking, doubtless, of the house in Blois and the peril she had run there; and, being for my part quite willing that she should think and feel how badly she had acted, I stood looking at her, sparing her no whit of my glance.

‘The gold chain you left on my mother’s pillow,’ I said coldly, seeing she continued silent, ‘I cannot return to you at once, for I have pledged it. But I will do so as soon as I can.’

‘You have pledged it?’ she muttered, with her eyes averted.

‘Yes, mademoiselle, to procure a horse to bring me here,’ I replied dryly. ‘However, it shall be redeemed. In return, there is something I too would ask.’

‘What?’ she murmured, recovering herself with an effort, and looking at me with something of her old pride and defiance.

‘The broken coin you have,’ I said. ‘The token, I mean. It is of no use to you, for your enemies hold the other half. It might be of service to me.’

‘How?’ she asked curtly.

‘Because some day I may find its fellow, mademoiselle.’

‘And then?’ she cried. She looked at me, her lips parted, her eyes flashing. ‘What then, when you have found its fellow, M. de Marsac?’

I shrugged my shoulders.

‘Bah!’ she exclaimed, clenching her little hand, and stamping her foot on the floor in a passion I could not understand. ‘That is you! That is M. de Marsac all over. You say nothing, and men think nothing of you. You go with your hat in your hand, and they tread on you. They speak, and you are silent! Why, if I could use a sword as you can, I would keep silence before no man, nor let any man save the King of France cock his hat in my presence! But you! There! go, leave me. Here is your coin. Take it and go. Send me that lad of yours to keep me awake. At any rate he has brains, he is young, he is a man, he has a soul, he can feel—if he were anything but a clerk.’

She waved me off in such a wind of passion as might have amused me in another, but in her smacked so strongly of ingratitude as to pain me not a little. I went, however, and sent Simon to her; though I liked the errand very ill, and no better when I saw the lad’s face light up at the mention of her name. But apparently she had not recovered her temper when he reached her, for he fared no better than I had done; coming away presently with the air of a whipped dog, as I saw from the yew-tree walk where I was strolling.

Still, after that she made it a habit to talk to him more and more; and, Monsieur and Madame de Rosny being much taken up with one another, there was no one to check her fancy or speak a word of advice. Knowing her pride, I had no fears for her; but it grieved me to think that the lad’s head should be turned. A dozen times I made up my mind to speak to her on his behalf; but for one thing it was not my business, and for another I soon discovered that she was aware of my displeasure, and valued it not a jot. For venturing one morning, when she was in a pleasant humour, to hint that she treated those beneath her too inhumanly, and with an unkindness as little becoming noble blood as familiarity,

she asked me scornfully if I did not think she treated Simon Fleix well enough. To which I had nothing to answer.

I might here remark on the system of secret intelligence by means of which M. de Rosny, even in this remote place, received news of all that was passing in France. But it is common fame. There was no coming or going of messengers, which would quickly have aroused suspicion in the neighbouring town, nor was it possible even for me to say exactly by what channels news came. But come it did, and at all hours of the day. In this way we heard of the danger of La Ganache and of the effort contemplated by the King of Navarre for its relief. M. de Rosny not only communicated these matters to me without reserve, but engaged my affections by farther proofs of confidence such as might well have flattered a man of greater importance.

I have said that, as a rule, there was no coming or going of messengers. But one evening, returning from the chase with one of the keepers, who had prayed my assistance in hunting down a crippled doe, I was surprised to find a strange horse, which had evidently been ridden hard and far, standing smoking in the yard. Inquiring whose it was, I learned that a man believed by the grooms to be from Blois had just arrived and was closeted with the baron. An event so far out of the ordinary course of things naturally aroused my wonder; but desiring to avoid any appearance of curiosity, which, if indulged, is apt to become the most vulgar of vices, I refrained from entering the house, and repaired instead to the yew-walk. I had scarcely, however, heated my blood, a little chilled with riding, before the page came to me to fetch me to his master.

I found M. de Rosny striding up and down his room, his manner so disordered and his face disfigured by so much grief and horror that I started on seeing him. My heart sinking in a moment, I did not need to look at Madame, who sat weeping silently in a chair, to assure myself that something dreadful had happened. The light was failing, and a lamp had been brought into the room. M. de Rosny pointed abruptly to a small piece of paper which lay on the table beside it, and, obeying his gesture, I took this up and read its contents, which consisted of less than a score of words.

‘He is ill and like to die,’ the message ran, ‘twenty leagues south of La Ganache. Come at all costs. P. M.’

‘Who?’ I said stupidly—stupidly, for already I began to understand. ‘Who is ill and like to die?’

M. de Rosny turned to me, and I saw that the tears were trickling unbidden down his cheeks. ‘There is but one *he* for me,’ he cried. ‘May God spare that one! May He spare him to France, which needs him, to the Church, which hangs on him, and to me, who love him! Let him not fall in the hour of fruition. O Lord, let him not fall!’ And he sank on to a stool, and remained in that posture with his face in his hands, his broad shoulders shaken with grief.

‘Come, sir,’ I said, after a pause sacred to sorrow and dismay; ‘let me remind you that while there is life there is hope.’

‘Hope?’

‘Yes, M. de Rosny, hope,’ I replied more cheerfully. ‘He has work to do. He is elected, called, and chosen; the Joshua of his people, as M. d’Amours rightly called him. God will not take him yet. You shall see him and be embraced by him, as has happened a hundred times. Remember, sir, the King of Navarre is strong, hardy, and young, and no doubt in good hands.’

‘Mornay’s,’ M. de Rosny cried, looking up with contempt in his eye.

Yet from that moment he rallied, spurred, I think, by the thought that the King of Navarre’s recovery depended under God on M. de Mornay; whom he was ever inclined to regard as his rival. He began to make instant preparations for departure from Rosny, and bade me do so also, telling me, somewhat curtly and without explanation, that he had need of me. The danger of so speedy a return to the South, where the full weight of the Vicomte de Turenne’s vengeance awaited me, occurred to me strongly; and I ventured, though with a little shame, to mention it. But M. de Rosny, after gazing at me a moment in apparent doubt, put the objection aside with a degree of peevishness unusual in him, and continued to press on his arrangements as earnestly as though they did not include separation from a wife equally loving and beloved.

Having few things to look to myself, I was at leisure, when the hour of departure came, to observe both the courage with which Madame de Rosny supported her sorrow, ‘for the sake of France,’ and the unwonted tenderness which Mademoiselle de la Vire, lifted for once above herself, lavished on her. I seemed to stand—happily in one light, and yet the feeling was fraught with pain—outside their familiar relations; yet, having made my adieux as short and formal as possible, that I might not encroach on other and more sacred ones, I found at the last moment something

in waiting for me. I was surprised as I rode under the gateway a little ahead of the others, by something small and light falling on the saddle-bow before me. Catching it before it could slide to the ground, I saw, with infinite astonishment, that I held in my hand a tiny velvet bow.

To look up at the window of the parlour, which I have said was over the archway, was my first impulse. I did so, and met mademoiselle's eyes for a second, and a second only. The next moment she was gone. M. de Rosny clattered through the gate at my heels, the servants behind him. And we were on the road.

CHAPTER XIV.

M. DE RAMBOUILLET.

FOR a while we were but a melancholy party. The incident I have last related—which seemed to admit of more explanations than one—left me in a state of the greatest perplexity; and this prevailed with me for a time, and was only dissipated at length by my seeing my own face, as it were, in a glass. For, chancing presently to look behind me, I observed that Simon Fleix was riding, notwithstanding his fine hat and feather and his new sword, in a posture and with an air of dejection difficult to exaggerate; whereon the reflection that master and man had the same object in their minds—nay, the thought that possibly he bore in his bosom a like token to that which lay warm in mine—occurring to me, I roused myself as from some degrading dream, and, shaking up the Cid, cantered forward to join Rosny, who, in no cheerful mood himself, was riding steadily forward, wrapped to his eyes in his cloak.

The news of the King of Navarre's illness had fallen on him, indeed, in the midst of his sanguine scheming with the force of a thunderbolt. He saw himself in danger of losing at once the master he loved and the brilliant future to which he looked forward; and amid the imminent crash of his hopes and the destruction of the system in which he lived, he had scarcely time to regret the wife he was leaving at Rosny or the quiet from which he was so suddenly called. His heart was in the South, at La Ganache, by Henry's couch. His main idea was to get there quickly at all risks. The name of the King of Navarre's physician was constantly on his lips. 'Dortoman is a good man. If anyone can save him, Dor-

toman will,' was his perpetual cry. And whenever we met anyone who had the least appearance of bearing news, he would have me stop and interrogate him, and by no means let the traveller go until he had given us the last rumour from Blois—the channel through which all the news from the South reached us.

An incident which occurred at the inn that evening cheered him somewhat; the most powerful minds being prone, I have observed, to snatch at omens in times of uncertainty. An elderly man, of strange appearance, and dressed in an affected and bizarre fashion, was seated at table when we arrived. Though I entered first in my assumed capacity of leader of the party, he let me pass before him without comment, but rose and solemnly saluted M. de Rosny, albeit the latter walked behind me and was much more plainly dressed. Rosny returned his greeting and would have passed on; but the stranger, interposing with a still lower bow, invited him to take his seat, which was near the fire and sheltered from the draught, at the same time making as if he would himself remove to another place.

‘Nay,’ said my companion, surprised by such an excess of courtesy, ‘I do not see why I should take your place, sir.’

‘Not mine only,’ the old man rejoined, looking at him with a particularity and speaking with an emphasis which attracted our attention, ‘but those of many others, who I can assure you will very shortly yield them up to you, whether they will or not.’

M. de Rosny shrugged his shoulders and passed on, affecting to suppose the old man wandered. But privately he thought much of his words, and more when he learned that he was an astrologer from Paris, who had the name, at any rate in this country, of having studied under Nostradamus. And whether he drew fresh hopes from this, or turned his attention more particularly as we approached Blois to present matters, certainly he grew more cheerful, and began again to discuss the future, as though assured of his master’s recovery.

‘You have never been to the King’s Court?’ he said presently, following up, as I judged, a train of thought in his own mind. ‘At Blois, I mean.’

‘No; nor do I feel anxious to visit it,’ I answered. ‘To tell you the truth, M. le Baron,’ I continued with some warmth, ‘the sooner we are beyond Blois, the better I shall be pleased. I think we run some risk there, and, besides, I do not fancy a shambles. I do not think I could see the king without thinking of the Bartholomew, nor his chamber without thinking of Guise.’

'Tut, tut!' he said, 'you have killed a man before now.'

'Many,' I answered.

'Do they trouble you?'

'No, but they were killed in fair fight,' I replied. 'That makes a difference.'

'To you,' he said drily. 'But you are not the King of France, you see. Should you ever come across him,' he continued, flicking his horse's ears, a faint smile on his lips, 'I will give you a hint. Talk to him of the battles at Jarnac and Moncontour, and praise your Condé's father! As Condé lost the fight and he won it, the compliment comes home to him. The more hopelessly a man has lost his powers, my friend, the more fondly he regards them, and the more highly he prizes the victories he can no longer gain.'

'Ugh!' I muttered.

'Of the two parties at Court,' Rosny continued, calmly overlooking my ill-humour, 'trust D'Aumont and Biron and the French clique. They are true to France at any rate. But whomsoever you see consort with the two Retzs—the King of Spain's jackals as men name them—avoid him for a Spaniard and a traitor.'

'But the Retzs are Italians,' I objected peevishly.

'The same thing,' he answered curtly. 'They cry, "Vive le Roi!" but privately they are for the League, or for Spain, or for whatever may most hurt us; who are better Frenchmen than themselves, and whose leader will some day, if God spare his life, be King of France.'

'Well, the less I have to do with the one or the other of them, save at the sword's point, the better I shall be pleased,' I rejoined.

On that he looked at me with a queer smile; as was his way when he had more in his mind than appeared. And this, and something special in the tone of his conversation, as well, perhaps, as my own doubts about my future and his intentions regarding me, gave me an uneasy feeling; which lasted through the day, and left me only when more immediate peril presently rose to threaten us.

It happened in this way. We had reached the outskirts of Blois, and were just approaching the gate, hoping to pass through it without attracting attention, when two travellers rode slowly out of a lane, the mouth of which we were passing. They eyed us closely as they reined in to let us go by; and M. de Rosny, who was riding with his horse's head at my stirrup, whispered me to press on. Before I could comply, however, the strangers cantered by us, and turning in the saddle when abreast of us looked us in

the face. A moment later one of them cried loudly, 'It is he!' and both pulled their horses across the road, and waited for us to come up.

Aware that if M. de Rosny were discovered he would be happy if he escaped with imprisonment, the king being too jealous of his Catholic reputation to venture to protect a Huguenot, however illustrious, I saw that the situation was desperate; for, though we were five to two, the neighbourhood of the city—the gate being scarcely a bow-shot off—rendered flight or resistance equally hopeless. I could think of nothing for it save to put a bold face on the matter, and, M. de Rosny doing the same, we advanced in the most innocent way possible.

'Halt, there!' cried one of the strangers sharply. 'And let me tell you, sir, you are known.'

'What if I am?' I answered impatiently, still pressing on. 'Are you highwaymen, that you stop the way?'

The speaker on the other side looked at me keenly, but in a moment retorted, 'Enough trifling, sir! Who *you* are I do not know. But the person riding at your rein is M. de Rosny. Him I do know, and I warn him to stop.'

I thought the game was lost, but to my surprise my companion answered at once and almost in the same words I had used. 'Well, sir, and what of that?' he said.

'What of that?' the stranger exclaimed, spurring his horse so as still to bar the way. 'Why, only this, that you must be a madman to show yourself on this side of the Loire.'

'It is long since I have seen the other,' was my companion's unmoved answer.

'You are M. de Rosny? You do not deny it?' the man cried in astonishment.

'Certainly I do not deny it,' M. de Rosny answered bluntly. 'And more, the day has been, sir,' he continued with sudden fire, 'when few at his Majesty's Court would have dared to chop words with Solomon de Bethune, much less to stop him on the highway within a mile of the palace. But times are changed with me, sir, and it would seem with others also, if true men rallying to his Majesty in his need are to be challenged by every passer on the road.'

'What! Are you Solomon de Bethune?' the man cried incredulously. Incredulously, but his countenance fell, and his voice was full of chagrin and disappointment.

'Who else, sir?' M. de Rosny replied haughtily. 'I am, and,

as far as I know, I have as much right on this side of the Loire as any other man.'

'A thousand pardons.'

'If you are not satisfied——'

'Nay, M. de Rosny, I am perfectly satisfied.'

The stranger repeated this with a very crestfallen air, adding, 'A thousand pardons'; and fell to making other apologies, doffing his hat with great respect. 'I took you, if you will pardon me saying so, for your Huguenot brother, M. Maximilian,' he explained. 'The saying goes that he is at Rosny.'

'I can answer for that being false,' M. de Rosny answered peremptorily, 'for I have just come from there, and I will answer for it he is not within ten leagues of the place. And now, sir, as we desire to enter before the gates shut, perhaps you will excuse us.' With which he bowed, and I bowed, and they bowed, and we separated. They gave us the road, which M. de Rosny took with a great air, and we trotted to the gate, and passed through it without misadventure.

The first street we entered was a wide one, and my companion took advantage of this to ride up abreast of me. 'That is the kind of adventure our little prince is fond of,' he muttered. 'But for my part, M. de Marsac, the sweat is running down my forehead. I have played the trick more than once before, for my brother and I are as like as two peas. And yet it would have gone ill with us if the fool had been one of his friends.'

'All's well that ends well,' I answered in a low voice, thinking it an ill time for compliments. As it was, the remark was unfortunate, for M. de Rosny was still in the act of reining back when Maignan called out to us to say we were being followed.

I looked behind, but could see nothing except gloom and rain and overhanging eaves and a few figures cowering in doorways. The servants, however, continued to maintain that it was so, and we held, without actually stopping, a council of war. If detected, we were caught in a trap, without hope of escape; and for the moment I am sure M. de Rosny regretted that he had chosen this route by Blois—that he had thrust himself, in his haste and his desire to take with him the latest news, into a snare so patent. The castle—huge, dark, and grim—loomed before us at the end of the street in which we were, and, chilled as I was myself by the sight, I could imagine how much more appalling it must appear to him, the chosen counsellor of his master, and the steadfast opponent of all which it represented.

Our consultation came to nothing, for no better course suggested itself than to go as we had intended to the lodging commonly used by my companion. We did so, looking behind us often, and saying more than once that Maignan must be mistaken. As soon as we had dismounted, however, and gone in, he showed us from the window a man loitering near; and this confirmation of our alarm sending us to our expedients again, while Maignan remained watching in a room without a light, I suggested that I might pass myself off, though ten years older, for my companion.

‘Alas!’ he said, drumming with his fingers on the table, ‘there are too many here who know me to make that possible. I thank you all the same.’

‘Could you escape on foot? Or pass the wall anywhere, or slip through the gates early?’ I suggested.

‘They might tell us at the Bleeding Heart,’ he answered. ‘But I doubt it. I was a fool, sir, to put my neck into Mendoza’s halter, and that is a fact. But here is Maignan. What is it, man?’ he continued eagerly.

‘The watcher is gone, my lord,’ the equerry answered.

‘And has left no one?’

‘No one that I can see.’

We both went into the next room and looked from the windows. The man was certainly not where we had seen him before. But the rain was falling heavily, the eaves were dripping, the street was a dark cavern with only here and there a spark of light, and the fellow might be lurking elsewhere. Maignan, being questioned, however, believed he had gone off of set purpose.

‘Which may be read half a dozen ways,’ I remarked.

‘At any rate, we are fasting,’ M. de Rosny answered. ‘Give me a full man in a fight. Let us sit down and eat. It is no good jumping in the dark, or meeting troubles half way.’

We were not through our meal, however, Simon Fleix waiting on us with a pale face, when Maignan came in again from the dark room. ‘My lord,’ he said quietly, ‘three men have appeared. Two of them remain twenty paces away. The third has come to the door.’

As he spoke we heard a cautious summons below. Maignan was for going down, but his master bade him stand. ‘Let the woman of the house go,’ he said.

I remarked and long remembered M. de Rosny’s *sangfroid* on this occasion. His pistols he had already laid on a chair beside him, throwing his cloak over them; and now, while we waited, listening

in breathless silence, I saw him hand a large slice of bread-and-meat to his equerry, who, standing behind his chair, began eating it with the same coolness. Simon Fleix, on the other hand, stood gazing at the door, trembling in every limb, and with so much of excitement and surprise in his attitude that I took the precaution of bidding him, in a low voice, do nothing without orders. At the same moment it occurred to me to extinguish two of the four candles which had been lighted; and I did so, M. de Rosny nodding assent, just as the muttered conversation which was being carried on below ceased, and a man's tread sounded on the stairs.

It was followed immediately by a knock on the outside of our door. Obeying my companion's look, I cried, 'Enter!'

A slender man of middle height, booted and wrapped up, with his face almost entirely hidden by a fold of his cloak, came in quickly, and, closing the door behind him, advanced towards the table. 'Which is M. de Rosny?' he said.

Rosny had carefully turned his face from the light, but at the sound of the other's voice he sprang up with a cry of relief. He was about to speak, when the new-comer, raising his hand peremptorily, continued, 'No names, I beg. Yours, I suppose, is known here. Mine is not, nor do I desire it should be. I want speech of you, that is all.'

'I am greatly honoured,' M. de Rosny replied, gazing at him eagerly. 'Yet, who told you I was here?'

'I saw you pass under a lamp in the street,' the stranger answered. 'I knew your horse first, and you afterwards, and bade a groom follow you. Believe me,' he added, with a gesture of the hand, 'you have nothing to fear from me.'

'I accept the assurance in the spirit in which it is offered,' my companion answered with a graceful bow, 'and think myself fortunate in being recognised'—he paused a moment and then continued—'by a Frenchman and a man of honour.'

The stranger shrugged his shoulders. 'Your pardon, then,' he said, 'if I seem abrupt. My time is short. I want to do the best with it I can. Will you favour me?'

I was for withdrawing, but M. de Rosny ordered Maignan to place lights in the next room, and, apologising to me very graciously, retired thither with the stranger, leaving me relieved indeed by these peaceful appearances, but full of wonder and conjectures who this might be, and what the visit portended. At one moment I was inclined to identify the stranger with M. de Rosny's brother; at another with the English ambassador; and then, again, a wild

idea that he might be M. de Bruhl occurred to me. The two remained together about a quarter of an hour and then came out, the stranger leading the way, and saluting me politely as he passed through the room. At the door he turned to say, 'At nine o'clock, then ?'

'At nine o'clock,' M. de Rosny replied, holding the door open. 'You will excuse me if I do not descend, Marquis ?'

'Yes, go back, my friend,' the stranger answered. And, lighted by Maignan, whose face on such occasions could assume the most stolid air in the world, he disappeared down the stairs, and I heard him go out.

M. de Rosny turned to me, his eyes sparkling with joy, his face and mien full of animation. 'The King of Navarre is better,' he said. 'He is said to be out of danger. What do you think of that, my friend ?'

'That it is the best news I have heard for many a day,' I answered. And I hastened to add, that France and the Religion had reason to thank God for His mercy.

'Amen to that,' my patron replied reverently. 'But that is not all—that is not all.' And he began to walk up and down the room humming the 118th Psalm a little above his breath—

La voici l'heureuse journée
Que Dieu a faite à plein désir ;
Par nous soit joie démenée,
Et prenons en elle plaisir.

He continued, indeed, to walk up and down the floor so long, and with so joyful a countenance and demeanour, that I ventured at last to remind him of my presence, which he had clearly forgotten. 'Ha ! to be sure,' he said, stopping short and looking at me with the utmost good-humour. 'What time is it ? Seven. Then until nine o'clock, my friend, I crave your indulgence. In fine, until that time I must keep counsel. Come, I am hungry still. Let us sit down, and this time I hope we may not be interrupted. Simon, set us on a fresh bottle. Ha ! ha ! *Vivent le Roi et le Roi de Navarre !*' And again he fell to humming the same psalm—

O Dieu éternel, je te prie,
Je te prie, ton roi maintiens :
O Dieu, je te prie et reprie,
Sauve ton roi et l'entretiens !

doing so with a light in his eyes and a joyous emphasis, which impressed me the more in a man ordinarily so calm and self-

contained. I saw that something had occurred to gratify him beyond measure, and, believing his statement that this was not the good news from La Ganache only, I waited with the utmost interest and anxiety for the hour of nine, which had no sooner struck than our former visitor appeared with the same air of mystery and disguise which had attended him before.

M. de Rosny, who had risen on hearing his step and had taken up his cloak, paused with it half on and half off, to cry anxiously, 'All is well, is it not?'

'Perfectly,' the stranger replied, with a nod.

'And my friend?'

'Yes, on condition that you answer for his discretion and fidelity.' And the stranger glanced involuntarily at me, who stood uncertain whether to hold my ground or retire.

'Good,' M. de Rosny cried. Then he turned to me with a mingled air of dignity and kindness, and continued: 'This is the gentleman. M. de Marsac, I am honoured with permission to present you to the Marquis de Rambouillet, whose interest and protection I beg you to deserve, for he is a true Frenchman and a patriot whom I respect.'

M. de Rambouillet saluted me politely. 'Of a Brittany family, I think?' he said.

I assented; and he replied with something complimentary. But afterwards he continued to look at me in silence with a keenness and curiosity I did not understand. At last, when M. de Rosny's impatience had reached a high pitch, the marquis seemed impelled to add something. 'You quite understand, M. de Rosny?' he said. 'Without saying anything disparaging of M. de Marsac, who is, no doubt, a man of honour'—and he bowed to me very low—'this is a delicate matter, and you will introduce no one into it, I am sure, whom you cannot trust as yourself.'

'Precisely,' M. de Rosny replied, speaking drily, yet with a grand air which fully matched his companion's. 'I am prepared to trust this gentleman not only with my life but with my honour.'

'Nothing more remains to be said then,' the marquis rejoined, bowing to me again. 'I am glad to have been the occasion of a declaration so flattering to you, sir.'

I returned his salute in silence, and obeying M. de Rosny's muttered direction put on my cloak and sword. M. de Rosny took up his pistols.

'You will have no need of those,' the marquis said with a high glance.

‘Where we are going, no,’ my companion answered, calmly continuing to dispose them about him. ‘But the streets are dark and not too safe.’

M. de Rambouillet laughed. ‘That is the worst of you Huguenots,’ he said. ‘You never know when to lay suspicion aside.’

A hundred retorts sprang to my lips. I thought of the Bartholomew, of the French fury of Antwerp, of half a dozen things which make my blood boil to this day. But M. de Rosny’s answer was the finest of all. ‘That is true, I am afraid,’ he said quietly. ‘On the other hand, you Catholics—take the late M. de Guise for instance—have the habit of erring on the other side, I think, and sometimes trust too far.’

The marquis, without making any answer to this home-thrust, led the way out, and we followed, being joined at the door of the house by a couple of armed lackeys, who fell in behind us. We went on foot. The night was dark, and the prospect out of doors was not cheering. The streets were wet and dirty, and notwithstanding all our care we fell continually into pitfalls or over unseen obstacles. Crossing the *parvis* of the cathedral, which I remembered, we plunged in silence into an obscure street near the river, and so narrow that the decrepit houses shut out almost all view of the sky. The gloom of our surroundings, no less than my ignorance of the errand on which we were bound, filled me with anxiety and foreboding. My companions keeping strict silence, however, and taking every precaution to avoid being recognised, I had no choice but to do likewise.

I could think, and no more. I felt myself borne along by an irresistible current, whither and for what purpose I could not tell; and experienced to an extent strange at my age the influence of the night and the weather. Twice we stood aside to let a party of roisterers go by, and the excessive care M. de Rambouillet evinced on these occasions to avoid recognition did not tend to reassure me or make me think more lightly of the unknown business on which I was bound.

Reaching at last an open space, our leader bade us in a low voice be careful and follow him closely. We did so, and crossed in this way and in single file a narrow plank or wooden bridge; but whether water ran below or a dry ditch only, I could not determine. My mind was taken up at the moment with the discovery which I had just made, that the dark building, looming huge and black before us with a single light twinkling here and there at great heights, was the Castle of Blois.

CHAPTER XV.

VILAIN HERODES.

ALL the distaste and misliking I had expressed earlier in the day for the Court of Blois recurred with fresh force in the darkness and gloom; and though, booted and travel-stained as we were, I did not conceive it likely that we should be obtruded on the circle about the king, I felt none the less an oppressive desire to be through with our adventure, and away from the ill-omened precincts in which I found myself. The darkness prevented me seeing the faces of my companions; but on M. de Rosny, who was not quite free himself, I think, from the influences of the time and place, twitching my sleeve to enforce vigilance, I noted that the lackeys had ceased to follow us, and that we three were beginning to ascend a rough staircase cut in the rock. I gathered, though the darkness limited my view behind as well as in front to a few twinkling lights, that we were mounting the scarp from the moat to the side wall of the castle; and I was not surprised when the marquis muttered to us to stop, and knocked softly on the wood of a door.

M. de Rosny might have spared the touch he had laid on my sleeve, for by this time I was fully and painfully sensible of the critical position in which we stood, and was very little likely to commit an indiscretion. I trusted he had not done so already! No doubt—it flashed across me while we waited—he had taken care to safeguard himself. But how often, I reflected, had all safeguards been set aside and all precautions eluded by those to whom he was committing himself! Guise had thought himself secure in this very building, which we were about to enter. Coligny had received the most absolute of safe-conducts from those to whom we were apparently bound. The end in either case had been the same—the confidence of the one proving of no more avail than the wisdom of the other. What if the King of France thought to make his peace with his Catholic subjects—offended by the murder of Guise—by a second murder of one as obnoxious to them as he was precious to their arch-enemy in the South? Rosny was sagacious indeed; but then I reflected with sudden misgiving that he was young, ambitious, and bold.

The opening of the door interrupted without putting an end to this train of apprehension. A faint light shone out; so feebly

as to illumine little more than the stairs at our feet. The marquis entered at once, M. de Rosny followed, I brought up the rear; and the door was closed by a man who stood behind it. We found ourselves crowded together at the foot of a very narrow staircase, which the doorkeeper—a stolid pikeman in a grey uniform, with a small lanthorn swinging from the cross-piece of his halberd—signed to us to ascend. I said a word to him, but he only stared in answer, and M. de Rambouillet, looking back and seeing what I was about, called to me that it was useless, as the man was a Swiss and spoke no French.

This did not tend to reassure me; any more than did the chill roughness of the wall which my hand touched as I groped upwards, or the smell of bats which invaded my nostrils and suggested that the staircase was little used and belonged to a part of the castle fitted for dark and secret doings.

We stumbled in the blackness up the steps, passing one door and then a second before M. de Rambouillet whispered to us to stand, and knocked gently at a third.

The secrecy, the darkness, and above all the strange arrangements made to receive us, filled me with the wildest conjectures. But when the door opened and we passed one by one into a bare, unfurnished, draughty gallery, immediately, as I judged, under the tiles, the reality agreed with no one of my anticipations. The place was a mere garret, without a hearth, without a single stool. Three windows, of which one was roughly glazed, while the others were filled with oiled paper, were set in one wall; the others displaying the stones and mortar without disguise or ornament. Beside the door through which we had entered stood a silent figure in the grey uniform I had seen below, his lanthorn on the floor at his feet. A second door at the farther end of the gallery, which was full twenty paces long, was guarded in like manner. A couple of lanthorns stood in the middle of the floor, and that was all.

Inside the door, M. de Rambouillet with his finger on his lip stopped us, and we stood a little group of three a pace in front of the sentry, and with the empty room before us. I looked at M. de Rosny, but he was looking at Rambouillet. The marquis had his back towards me, the sentry was gazing into vacancy; so that baffled in my attempt to learn anything from the looks of the other actors in the scene, I fell back on my ears. The rain dripped outside and the moaning wind rattled the casements; but mingled with these melancholy sounds—which gained force, as such things always do, from the circumstances in which we were placed and

our own silence—I fancied I caught the distant hum of voices and music and laughter. And that, I know not why, brought M. de Guise again to my mind.

The story of his death, as I had heard it from that accursed monk in the inn on the Claine, rose up in all its freshness, with all its details. I started when M. de Rambouillet coughed. I shivered when Rosny shifted his feet. The silence grew oppressive. Only the stolid men in grey seemed unmoved, unexpectant; so that I remember wondering whether it was their nightly duty to keep guard over an empty garret, the floor strewn with scraps of mortar and ends of tiles.

The interruption, when it came at last, came suddenly. The sentry at the farther end of the gallery started and fell back a pace. Instantly the door beside him opened and a man came in, and closing it quickly behind him, advanced up the room with an air of dignity, which even his strange appearance and attire could not wholly destroy.

He was of good stature and bearing, about forty years old as I judged, his wear a dress of violet velvet with black points cut in the extreme of the fashion. He carried a sword but no ruff, and had a cup and ball of ivory—a strange toy much in vogue among the idle—suspended from his wrist by a ribbon. He was lean and somewhat narrow, but so far I found little fault with him. It was only when my eye reached his face, and saw it rouged like a woman's and surmounted by a little turban, that a feeling of scarcely understood disgust seized me, and I said to myself, 'This is the stuff of which kings' minions are made!'

To my surprise, however, M. de Rambouillet went to meet him with the utmost respect, sweeping the dirty floor with his bonnet, and bowing to the very ground. The new-comer acknowledged his salute with negligent kindness. Remarking pleasantly 'You have brought a friend, I think?' he looked towards us with a smile.

'Yes, sire, he is here,' the marquis answered, stepping aside a little. And with the word I understood that this was no minion, but the king himself: Henry, the Third of the name, and the last of the great House of Valois, which had ruled France by the grace of God for two centuries and a half! I stared at him, and stared at him, scarcely believing what I saw. For the first time in my life I was in the presence of the king!

Meanwhile M. de Rosny, to whom he was, of course, no marvel, had gone forward and knelt on one knee. The king raised him

graciously, and with an action which, viewed apart from his woman's face and silly turban, seemed royal and fitting. 'This is good of you, Rosny,' he said. 'But it is only what I expected of you.'

'Sire,' my companion answered, 'your Majesty has no more devoted servant than myself, unless it be the king my master.'

'By my faith,' Henry answered with energy—'and if I am not a good churchman, whatever those rascally Parisians say, I am nothing—by my faith, I think I believe you!'

'If your Majesty would believe me in that and in some other things also,' M. de Rosny answered, 'it would be very well for France.' Though he spoke courteously, he threw so much weight and independence into his words that I thought of the old proverb, 'A good master, a bold servant.'

'Well, that is what we are here to see,' the king replied. 'But one tells me one thing,' he went on fretfully, 'and one another, and which am I to believe?'

'I know nothing of others, sire,' Rosny answered with the same spirit. 'But my master has every claim to be believed. His interest in the royalty of France is second only to your Majesty's. He is also a king and a kinsman, and it irks him to see rebels beard you, as has happened of late.'

'Ay, but the chief of them?' Henry exclaimed, giving way to sudden excitement and stamping furiously on the floor. 'He will trouble me no more. Has my brother heard of *that*? Tell me, sir, has that news reached him?'

'He has heard it, sire.'

'And he approved? He approved, of course?'

'Beyond doubt the man was a traitor,' M. de Rosny answered delicately. 'His life was forfeit, sire. Who can question it?'

'And he has paid the forfeit,' the king rejoined, looking down at the floor and immediately falling into a moodiness as sudden as his excitement. His lips moved. He muttered something inaudible, and began to play absently with his cup and ball, his mind occupied apparently with a gloomy retrospect. 'M. de Guise, M. de Guise,' he murmured at last, with a sneer and an accent of hate which told of old humiliations long remembered. 'Well, damn him, he is dead now. He is dead. But being dead he yet troubles us. Is not that the verse, father? Ha!' with a start, 'I was forgetting. But that is the worst wrong he has done me,' he continued, looking up and growing excited again. 'He has cut me off from Mother Church. There is hardly a priest comes near me now, and presently they will excom-

municate me. And, as I hope for salvation, the Church has no more faithful son than I.'

I believe he was on the point, forgetting M. de Rosny's presence there and his errand, of giving way to unmanly tears, when M. de Rambouillet, as if by accident, let the heel of his scabbard fall heavily on the floor. The king started, and passing his hand once or twice across his brow, seemed to recover himself. 'Well,' he said, 'no doubt we shall find a way out of our difficulties.'

'If your Majesty,' Rosny answered respectfully, 'would accept the aid my master proffers, I venture to think they would vanish the quicker.'

'You think so,' Henry rejoined. 'Well, give me your shoulder. Let us walk a little.' And, signing to Rambouillet to leave him, he began to walk up and down with M. de Rosny, talking familiarly with him in an undertone. Only such scraps of the conversation as fell from them when they turned at my end of the gallery now reached me. Patching these together, however, I managed to understand somewhat. At one turn I heard the king say, 'But then Turenne offers—' At the next, 'Trust him? Well, I do not know why I should not. He promises—' Then 'A Republic, Rosny? That his plan? Pooh! he dare not. He could not. France is a kingdom by the ordinance of God in my family.'

I gathered from these and other chance words, which I have since forgotten, that M. de Rosny was pressing the king to accept the help of the King of Navarre, and warning him against the insidious offers of the Vicomte de Turenne. The mention of a Republic, however, seemed to excite his Majesty's wrath rather against Rosny for presuming to refer to such a thing than against Turenne, to whom he refused to credit it. He paused near my end of the promenade.

'Prove it!' he said angrily. 'But can you prove it? Can you prove it? Mind you, I will take no hearsay evidence, sir. Now, there is Turenne's agent here—you did not know, I dare say, that he had an agent here?'

'You refer, sire, to M. de Bruhl,' Rosny answered, without hesitation. 'I know him, sire.'

'I think you are the devil,' Henry answered, looking curiously at him. 'You seem to know most things. But mind you, my friend, he speaks me fairly, and I will not take this on hearsay even from your master. Though,' he added after pausing a moment, 'I love him.'

‘And he, your Majesty. He desires only to prove it.’

‘Yes, I know, I know,’ the king answered fretfully. ‘I believe he does. I believe he does wish me well. But there will be a devil of an outcry among my people. And Turenne gives fair words too. And I do not know,’ he continued, fidgeting with his cup and ball, ‘that it might not suit me better to agree with him, you see.’

I saw M. de Rosny draw himself up. ‘Dare I speak openly to you, sire,’ he said, with less respect and more energy than he had hitherto used. ‘As I should to my master?’

‘Ay, say what you like,’ Henry answered. But he spoke sullenly, and it seemed to me that he looked less pleasantly at his companion.

‘Then I will venture to utter what is in your Majesty’s mind,’ my patron answered steadfastly. ‘You fear, sire, lest, having accepted my master’s offer and conquered your enemies, you should not be easily rid of him.’

Henry looked relieved. ‘Do you call that diplomacy?’ he said with a smile. ‘However, what if it be so? What do you say to it? Methinks I have heard an idle tale about a horse which would hunt a stag; and for the purpose set a man upon its back.’

‘This I say, sire, first,’ Rosny answered very earnestly. ‘That the King of Navarre is popular only with one-third of the kingdom, and is only powerful when united with you. Secondly, sire, it is his interest to support the royal power, to which he is heir. And, thirdly, it must be more to your Majesty’s honour to accept help from a near kinsman than from an ordinary subject, and one who, I still maintain, sire, has no good designs in his mind.’

‘The proof?’ Henry said sharply. ‘Give me that!’

‘I can give it in a week from this day.’

‘It must be no idle tale, mind you,’ the king continued suspiciously.

‘You shall have Turenne’s designs, sire, from one who had them from his own mouth.’

The king looked startled, but after a pause turned and resumed his walk. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘if you do that, I on my part——’

The rest I lost, for the two passing to the farther end of the gallery, came to a standstill there, balking my curiosity and Ramboillet’s also. The marquis, indeed, began to betray his impatience, and the great clock immediately over our heads presently striking the half-hour after ten, he started and made as if he would have approached the king. He checked the impulse, however, but still

continued to fidget uneasily, losing his reserve by-and-by so far as to whisper to me that his Majesty would be missed.

I had been, up to this point, a silent and inactive spectator of a scene which appealed to my keenest interests and aroused my most ardent curiosity. Surprise following surprise, I had begun to doubt my own identity; so little had I expected to find myself first in the presence of the Most Christian King—and that under circumstances as strange and bizarre as could well be imagined—and then an authorised witness at a negotiation upon which the future of all the great land of France stretching for so many hundred leagues on every side of us, depended. I say I could scarcely believe in my own identity; or that I was the same Gaston de Marsac who had slunk, shabby and out-at-elbows, about St. Jean d'Angely. I tasted the first sweetness of secret power, which men say is the sweetest of all and the last relinquished; and, the hum of distant voices and laughter still reaching me at intervals, I began to understand why we had been admitted with so much precaution, and to comprehend the gratification of M. de Rosny when the promise of this interview first presented to him the hope of effecting so much for his master and for France.

Now I was to be drawn into the whirlpool itself. I was still travelling back over the different stages of the adventure which had brought me to this point, when I was rudely awakened by M. de Rosny calling my name in a raised voice. Seeing, somewhat late, that he was beckoning to me to approach, I went forward in a confused and hasty fashion; kneeling before the king as I had seen him kneel, and then rising to give ear to his Majesty's commands. Albeit, having expected nothing less than to be called upon, I was not in the clearest mood to receive them. Nor was my bearing such as I could have wished it to be.

'M. de Rosny tells me that you desire a commission at Court, sir,' the king said quickly.

'I, sire?' I stammered, scarcely able to believe my ears. I was so completely taken aback that I could say no more, and I stopped there with my mouth open.

'There are few things I can deny M. de Rosny,' Henry continued, speaking very rapidly, 'and I am told that you are a gentleman of birth and ability. Out of kindness to him, therefore, I grant you a commission to raise twenty men for my service. Rambouillet,' he continued, raising his voice slightly, 'you will introduce this gentleman to me publicly to-morrow, that I may carry into effect my intention on his behalf. You

may go now, sir. No thanks. And M. de Rosny,' he added, turning to my companion and speaking with energy, 'have a care for my sake that you are not recognised as you go. Rambouillet must contrive something to enable you to leave without peril. I should be desolated if anything happened to you, my friend, for I could not protect you. I give you my word if Mendoza or Retz found you in Blois I could not save you from them unless you recanted.'

'I will not trouble either your Majesty or my conscience,' M. de Rosny replied, bowing low, 'if my wits can help me.'

'Well, the saints keep you,' the king answered piously, going towards the door by which he had entered; 'for your master and I have both need of you. Rambouillet, take care of him as you love me. And come early in the morning to my closet and tell me how it has fared with him.'

We all stood bowing while he withdrew, and only turned to retire when the door closed behind him. Burning with indignation and chagrin as I was at finding myself disposed of in the way I have described, and pitchforked, whether I would or no, into a service I neither fancied nor desired, I still managed for the present to restrain myself; and, permitting my companions to precede me, followed in silence, listening sullenly to their jubilations. The marquis seemed scarcely less pleased than M. de Rosny; and as the latter evinced a strong desire to lessen any jealousy the former might feel, and a generous inclination to attribute to him a full share of the credit gained, I remained the only person dissatisfied with the evening's events. We retired from the château with the same precautions which had marked our entrance, and parting with M. de Rambouillet at the door of our lodging—not without many protestations of esteem on his part and of gratitude on that of M. de Rosny—mounted to the first-floor in single file and in silence, which I was determined not to be the first to break.

Doubtless M. de Rosny knew my thoughts, for, speedily dismissing Maignan and Simon, who were in waiting, he turned to me without preface. 'Come, my friend,' he said, laying his hand on my shoulder and looking me in the face in a way which all but disarmed me at once, 'do not let us misunderstand one another. You think you have cause to be angry with me. I cannot suffer that, for the King of Navarre had never greater need of your services than now.'

'You have played me an unworthy trick, sir,' I answered, thinking he would cozen me with fair speeches.

‘Tut, tut !’ he replied. ‘ You do not understand.’

‘ I understand well enough,’ I answered, with bitterness, ‘ that, having done the King of Navarre’s work, he would now be rid of me.’

‘ Have I not told you,’ M. de Rosny replied, betraying for the first time some irritation, ‘ that he has greater need of your services than ever ? Come, man, be reasonable, or, better still, listen to me.’ And turning from me, he began to walk up and down the room, his hands behind him. ‘ The King of France—I want to make it as clear to you as possible—’ he said, ‘ cannot make head against the League without help, and, willy-nilly, must look for it to the Huguenots whom he has so long persecuted. The King of Navarre, their acknowledged leader, has offered that help ; and so, to spite my master, and prevent a combination so happy for France, has M. de Turenne, who would fain raise the faction he commands to eminence, and knows well how to make his profit out of the dissensions of his country. Are you clear so far, sir ? ’

I assented. I was becoming absorbed in spite of myself.

‘ Very well,’ he resumed. ‘ This evening—never did anything fall out more happily than Rambouillet’s meeting with me—he is a good man !—I have brought the king to this : that if proof of the selfish nature of Turenne’s designs be laid before him he will hesitate no longer. That proof exists. A fortnight ago it was here ; but it is not here now.’

‘ That is unlucky ! ’ I exclaimed. I was so much interested in his story, as well as flattered by the confidence he was placing in me, that my ill-humour vanished. I went and stood with my shoulder against the mantelpiece, and he, passing to and fro between me and the light, continued his tale.

‘ A word about this proof,’ he said. ‘ It came into the King of Navarre’s hands before its full value was known to us, for that only accrued to it on M. de Guise’s death. A month ago it—this piece of evidence I mean—was at Chizé. A fortnight or so ago it was here in Blois. It is now, M. de Marsac,’ he continued, facing me suddenly as he came opposite me, ‘ in my house at Rosny.’

I started. ‘ You mean Mademoiselle de la Vire ? ’ I cried.

‘ I mean Mademoiselle de la Vire ! ’ he answered, ‘ who, some month or two ago, overheard M. de Turenne’s plans, and contrived to communicate with the King of Navarre. Before the latter could arrange a private interview, however, M. de Turenne got

wind of her dangerous knowledge, and swept her off to Chizé. The rest you know, M. de Marsac, if any man knows it.'

'But what will you do?' I asked. 'She is at Rosny.'

'Maignan, whom I trust implicitly, as far as his lights go, will start to fetch her to-morrow. At the same hour I start southwards. You, M. de Marsac, will remain here as my agent, to watch over my interests, to receive Mademoiselle on her arrival, to secure for her a secret interview with the king, to guard her while she remains here. Do you understand?'

Did I understand? I could not find words in which to thank him. My remorse and gratitude, my sense of the wrong I had done him, and of the honour he was doing me, were such that I stood mute before him as I had stood before the king. 'You accept, then?' he said, smiling. 'You do not deem the adventure beneath you, my friend?'

'I deserve your confidence so little, sir,' I answered, stricken to the ground, 'that I beg you to speak, while I listen. By attending exactly to your instructions I may prove worthy of the trust reposed in me. And only so.'

He embraced me again and again, with a kindness which moved me almost to tears. 'You are a man after my own heart,' he said, 'and if God wills I will make your fortune. Now listen, my friend. To-morrow at Court, as a stranger and a man introduced by Rambouillet, you will be the cynosure of all eyes. Bear yourself bravely. Pay court to the women, but attach yourself to no one in particular. Keep aloof from Retz and the Spanish faction, but beware especially of Bruhl. He alone will have your secret, and may suspect your design. Mademoiselle should be here in a week; while she is with you, and until she has seen the king, trust no one, suspect everyone, fear all things. Consider the battle won only when the king says, "I am satisfied."

Much more he told me, which served its purpose and has been forgotten. Finally he honoured me by bidding me share his pallet with him, that we might talk without restraint, and that if anything occurred to him in the night he might communicate it to me.

'But will not Bruhl denounce me as a Huguenot?' I asked him.

'He will not dare to do so,' M. de Rosny answered, 'both as a Huguenot himself, and as his master's representative; and, further, because it would displease the king. No, but whatever secret harm one man can do another, that you have to fear. Maignan,

when he returns with mademoiselle, will leave two men with you ; until they come I should borrow a couple of stout fellows from Rambouillet. Do not go out alone after dark, and beware of door-ways, especially your own.'

A little later, when I thought him asleep, I heard him chuckle ; and rising on my elbow I asked him what it was. 'Oh, it is your affair,' he answered, still laughing silently, so that I felt the mattress shake under him. 'I don't envy you one part of your task, my friend.'

'What is that?' I said suspiciously.

'Mademoiselle,' he answered, stifling with difficulty a burst of laughter. And after that he would not say another word, bad, good, or indifferent, though I felt the bed shake more than once, and knew he was digesting his pleasantry.

(To be continued.)

The Journal to Stella.

A DIM light was burning in the back room of a first-floor in Bury Street, St. James's. The apartment it illumined was not a spacious one; and the furniture, adequate rather than luxurious, had that indefinable lack of physiognomy which only lodging-house furniture seems to acquire. There was no fireplace; but in the adjoining parlour, partly visible through the open door, the last embers were dying in a grate from which the larger pieces of coal had been lifted away, and carefully ranged in order on the hobs. Across the heavy high-backed chairs in the bedroom lay various neatly-folded garments, one of which was the black gown with pudding sleeves usually worn in public by the eighteenth-century clergyman, while at the bottom of the bed hung a clerical-looking periwig. In the bed itself, and leaning toward a tall wax candle at his side (which, from a faint smell of burnt woollen still lingering about the chamber, must have recently come into contact with the now tucked-back bed-curtain), was a gentleman of forty or thereabouts, writing in a very small hand upon a very large sheet of paper, folded, for greater convenience, into one long horizontal slip. He had dark, fierce-looking eyebrows, a slightly aquiline nose, full-lidded and rather prominent clear blue eyes, a firmly-cut, handsome mouth, and a wide, massive forehead, the extent of which, for the moment, was abnormally exaggerated by the fact that, in the energy of composition, the fur-lined cap he had substituted for his wig had been slightly tilted backward. As his task proceeded his expression altered from time to time, now growing grave and stern, now inexpressibly soft and tender. Occasionally, the look almost passed into a kind of grimace, resembling nothing so much as the imitative motion of the lips which one makes in speaking to a pet bird. He continued writing until, in the distance, the step of the watchman, first pausing deliberately, then passing slowly forward for a few paces, was heard in the street below. "Past twelve o'clock!"

came a wheezy cry at the window. ‘Paaaaast twelvve o’clock!’ followed the writer, dragging out his letters so as to reproduce the speaker’s drawl. After this he rapidly set down a string of words in what looked like some unknown tongue, ending off with a trail of seeming hieroglyphics. ‘Nite, nown deelest sollahs. Nite dee litt MD, Pdfr’s MD. Rove Pdfr, poo Pdfr, MD MD MD FW FW FW Lele Lele Lele michar MD.’¹ Then, tucking his paper under his pillow, he popped out the guttering candle, and turning round upon his side with a smile of exceeding sweetness, settled himself to sleep.

The personage thus depicted was Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity, vicar of Laracor by Trim, in the diocese of Meath in the kingdom of Ireland, and Prebendary of Dunlavin in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. He had not been long in London, having but recently come over at the suggestion of Dr. William King, Archbishop of Dublin, to endeavour to obtain for the Irish clergy the remission (already conceded to their English brethren) of the First Fruits payable to the Crown; and he was writing off, or up, his daily record of his doings to Mrs. Rebecca Dingley and Mrs. Esther Johnson, two maiden ladies, who, in his absence from the Irish capital, were temporarily occupying his lodgings in Capel Street. At this date he must have been looking his best, for he had just been sitting to Pope’s friend, Charles Jervas, who, having painted him two years earlier, had found him grown so much fatter and better for his sojourn in Ireland that he had volunteered to retouch the portrait. He has given it ‘quite another turn,’ Swift tells his correspondents, ‘and now approves it entirely.’ Nearly twenty years later Alderman Barber presented this very picture to the Bodleian, where it is still to be seen; and it is, besides, familiar to the collector in George Vertue’s fine engraving. But even more interesting than the similitude of Swift in the fulness of his ungratified ambition are the letters we have seen him writing. With one exception, those of them which were printed, and garbled, by his fatuous namesake, Mrs. Whiteway’s son-in-law, are destroyed or lost; but all the latter portion, again with the exception of one, which Hawkesworth, a more conscientious, though by no means an irreproachable, editor, gave to the world in 1766, are preserved in the MSS. Department of the British

¹ ‘Sollahs’ = Sirrahs; ‘MD,’ Stella, or My Dear, but sometimes Stella-cum-Dingley; ‘FW,’ Farewell, or Foolish Wenches; ‘Lele’ is doubtful.

Museum, having fortunately been consigned in the same year by their confederated publishers to the safe keeping of that institution. They still bear, in many cases, the little seal (a classic female head), with which, after addressing them in laboriously legible fashion 'To Mrs. Dingley, at Mr. Curry's House, over against the Ram in Capel Street, Dublin, Ireland,' Swift was wont to fasten up his periodical despatches. Several of them are written on quarto paper with faint gilding at the edges,—the 'pretty small gilt sheet' to which he somewhere refers; but the majority are on a wide folio page crowded from top to bottom with an extremely minute and often abbreviated script, which must have tried other eyes besides those of Esther Johnson. 'I looked over a bit of my last letter,' he says himself on one occasion, 'and could hardly read it.' Elsewhere, in one of the letters now lost, he counts up no fewer than 199 lines; and in another of those that remain, taken at a venture, there are on the first side 69 lines, making, in the type of Scott's edition, rather more than five octavo pages. As for the 'little language' which produced the facial contortions above referred to ('When I am writing in our language I make up my mouth, just as if I were speaking'), it has been sadly mutilated by Hawkesworth's relentless pen. Many of the passages which he struck through were, with great ingenuity, restored by the late John Forster, from whom, in the little picture at the beginning of this paper, we borrowed a few of those recovered hieroglyphs. But the bulk of their 'huge babyisms' and 'dear diminutives' are almost too intimate and particular for the rude publicities of type. '*Dans ce ravissant opéra qu'on appelle l'amour*', says Victor Hugo, '*le libretto n'est presque rien*'; and if for '*amour*' we read '*amitié*', the aphorism, it must be admitted, is not untrue of Swift's famous 'special code' to Stella.

There can, however, be no doubt of the pleasure with which Swift's communications must have been welcomed by the two ladies at Capel Street, not occupied, as was the writer, with the ceaseless bustle of an unusually busy world, but restricted to such minor dissipations as a little horse exercise, or a quiet game of ombre at Dean Sterne's, to the modest accompaniment of claret and oranges. Swift's unique and wonderful command of his mother tongue has never been shown to such advantage as in these familiar records, bristling with proverbs and folk-lore invented *ad hoc*, with puns good and bad, with humour, irony, common sense, and playfulness. One can imagine with what eagerness the large sheet must have been unfolded, and read—not

all at once, but in easy stages—by Mrs. Dingley to the impatient Mrs. Johnson, for whom it was primarily intended, but whose eyes were too weak to read it. Yet, to the modern student, the *Journal to Stella*, taken as a whole, scarcely achieves the success which its peculiar attributes lead one to anticipate. It remains, as must always be remembered, strictly a journal, with a journal's defects. There is a lack of connected interest; there is also a superfluity of detail. Regarded in the light of an historical picture, it is like Hogarth's *March to Finchley*: the crowd in the foreground obscures the central action. It treats, indeed, of a stirring and a momentous time, for power was changing hands. The Whigs had given place to the Tories; adroit Mrs. Masham had supplanted 'Mrs. Freeman'; the Great Captain himself was falling with a crash. Abroad, the long Continental war was dwindling to its close; at home, the Treaty of Utrecht was preparing. Of all this, however, one rather overhears than hears. In Swift's gallery there are no portraits *à la* Clarendon with sweeping robes; at best there are but thumb-nail sketches. Nowhere have we such a finished full-length as that of Bolingbroke in the *Inquiry into the Behaviour of the Ministry*; nowhere a scathing satire like the 'Verres' kitcat of Wharton in the seventeenth *Examiner*. Nor are there anywhere accounts of occurrences which loom much larger than the stabbing of Harley by Guiscard, or the duel of Hamilton and Mohun. Not the less does the canvas swarm with figures, many of whom bear famous names. Now it is Anna Augusta herself, driving red-faced to hounds in her one-horse chaise, or yawning behind her fan-sticks at a tedious reception; now it is that 'pure trifler' Harley, dawdling and temporising as he does in Prior—

'Yea,' quoth the Erle, 'but not to-day,'—

or spelling out the inn signs between Kew and London; now it is Peterborough, 'the ramblingest lying rogue on earth,' talking deep politics at a barber's, preparatory to starting for the world's end with the morrow; now it is Mrs. St. John, on her way to the Bath, beseeching Swift to watch over her illustrious husband, who (like Stella!) is not to be governed, and will certainly make himself ill between business and Burgundy. Many others pass and re-pass—Congreve (*quantum mutatus!*), a broken man, but cheerful, though 'almost blind with cataracts growing on his eyes'; Prior, with hollow cheeks, sitting solemnly at the 'Smyrna' receiving visits of ceremony, or walking in the Park to make himself fat, or dis-

appearing mysteriously on diplomatic expeditions to Paris; grave Addison rehearsing *Cato*, and sometimes un-Catonically fuddled; Steele bustling over *Tatlers* and *Spectators*, and 'governed by his wife most abominably, as bad as Marlborough'; 'pastoral Philips, (with his red stockings), just arrived from Denmark; clever, kindly Dr. Arbuthnot, 'the queen's favourite physician,' meditating new 'bites' for the maids of honour or fresh chapters in *John Bull*; young Mr. Berkeley of Kilkenny with his Dialogues against Atheism in his pocket, and burning 'to make acquaintance with men of merit'; Atterbury, finessing for his Christ Church deanery. Then there are the great ladies—Mrs. Masham, who has a red nose, but is Swift's friend; Lady Somerset, the 'Carrots' of the *Windsor Prophecy*, who has red hair, and is his enemy; sensible and spirited Lady Betty Germaine; the Duchess of Grafton (in a *fontange* of the last reign); Newton's niece, pretty Mrs. Barton; good-tempered Lady Harley, hapless Mrs. Ann Long, and a host of others. And among them all, 'unhasting, unresting,' filling the scene like Coquelin in *L'Étourdi*, comes and goes the figure of 'Parson Swift' himself, now striding full-blown down St. James's Street in his cassock, gown, and three-guinea periwig; now riding through Windsor Forest in a borrowed suit of 'light camlet, faced with red velvet, and silver buttons.' Sometimes he is feasting royally at 'Ozinda's' or the 'Thatched House' with the society of 'Brothers'; sometimes dining moderately in the City with Barber, his printer, or Will Pate, the 'learned woollen-draper'; sometimes scurvily at a blind tavern 'upon gill ale, bad broth, and three chops of mutton.' You may follow him wherever he goes, whether it be to Greenwich with the Dean of Carlisle, or to Hampton with 'Lord Treasurer,' or to hear the nightingales at Vauxhall with my Lady Kerry. He tells you when he buys books at Bateman's in Little Britain, or spectacles for Stella on Ludgate Hill, or Brazil tobacco, which Mrs. Dingley will rasp into snuff, at Charles Lillie the perfumer's in Beaufort Buildings. He sets down everything—his maladies (very specifically), his misadventures, economies, extravagances, dreams, disappointments—his *votum, timor, ira, voluptas*. The *timor* is chiefly for those dogs the Mohocks ('Who has not trembled at the *Mohock's* name?'); the *ira*, to a considerable extent, for that most exasperating of retainers, his man-servant Patrick.

It has been said that the *Journal to Stella* contains no finished character-sketches; but so many entries are involved by the peccadilloes of Patrick that after a time he begins, from

sheer force of reappearance, to assume the lineaments of a personage. At first he is merely a wheedling, good-looking Irish boy—an obvious 'Teaguelander,' as Sir Thomas Mansel calls him. He makes his *début* in the third letter with the remark that 'the rabble here [i.e. in London] are much more inquisitive in politics than in Ireland,' an utterance having all the air of a philosophic reflection. Being, however, endowed with fine natural aptitudes, he is speedily demoralised by those rakes the London footmen. 'Patrick is drunk about three times a week,' says the next record, 'and I bear it, and he has got the better of me; but one of these days I will positively turn him off to the wide world, when none of you are by to intercede for him,' from which we must infer that Patrick was, or had been, a favourite with the ladies at Dublin. He has another vice in Swift's eyes; he is extravagant. Coals cost twelvepence a week, yet he piles up the fires so recklessly that his economical master has laboriously to pick them to pieces again. Still he has a good heart, for he buys a linnet for Mrs. Dingley, at a personal sacrifice of sixpence, and in direct opposition to his master's advice. 'I laid before him the greatness of the sum, and the rashness of the attempt; showed how impossible it would be to carry him safe over the salt sea: but he would not take my counsel, and he will repent it.' A month later the unhappy bird is still alive, though grown very wild. It lives in a closet, where it makes a terrible litter. 'But I say nothing: I am as tame as a clout.' This restraint is the more notable in that Patrick himself has been for ten days out of favour. 'I talk dry and cross to him, and have called him "friend" three or four times.' Then, having been drunk again, he is all but discharged, and Mrs. Vanhomrigh (a near neighbour) has to make the peace. He is certainly trying: he loses keys, forgets messages, locks up clothes at critical moments, and so forth. But he is accustomed to Swift's ways, and the next we hear of him is that, 'intolerable rascal' though he be, he is going to have a livery which will cost four pounds, and that he has offered to pay for the lace on his hat out of his own wages. Yet his behaviour is still so bad that his master is afraid to give him his new clothes, though he has not the heart to withhold them. 'I wish MD were here to entreat for him—just here at the bed's side.' Then there is a vivid little study of Swift bathing in the Thames at Chelsea, with Patrick on guard—of course quite perfumorily—to prevent his master's being disturbed by boats. 'That puppy Patrick, standing ashore, would let them come within a yard or two, and then call sneakingly to

them.' After this he takes to the study of Congreve, goes to the play, fights in his cups with another gentleman's gentleman, by whom he is dragged along the floor upon his face, 'which looked for a week after as if he had the leprosy; and,' adds the diarist grimly, 'I was glad enough to see it.' Later on he enrages his master so much by keeping him waiting, that Swift is provoked into giving him 'two or three swingeing cuffs on the ear,' spraining his own thumb thereby, though Arbuthnot thinks it may be gout. 'He [Patrick] was plaguily afraid and humbled.' That he was more frightened than repentant, the sequel shows. 'I gave him half a crown for his Christmas box, on condition he would be good,' says Swift, whose forbearance is certainly extraordinary, 'and he came home drunk at midnight.' Worse than this, he sometimes never comes home at all. At last arrives the inevitable hour when he is 'turned off to the wide world,' and he never seems to have succeeded in coaxing himself back again. Yet one fancies that Swift must have secretly regretted his loss; and it would, no doubt, have been edifying to hear Patrick upon his master.

There is one person, however, for fuller details respecting whom one would willingly surrender the entire 'Patrickiad,' and that is the lady in whose interest the journal was written, since Mrs. Rebecca Dingley, notwithstanding the many conventional references to her, does no more than play the mute and self-denying part of Propriety. But of Esther Johnson (as she signs herself) we get, in reality, little beyond the fact that her health at this time was already a source of anxiety to her friends. The Journal is full of injunctions to her to take exercise, especially horse exercise, and not to attempt to read Pdfr's 'ugly small hand,' but to let Dingley read it to her. 'Preserve your eyes, if you be wise,' says a distich manufactured for the occasion. Nor is she to write until she is 'mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty well' in her sight, and is sure it will not do her the least hurt. 'Or come, I will tell you what; you, Mistress Ppt, shall write your share at five or six sittings, one sitting a day; and then comes DD altogether, and then Ppt a little crumb towards the end, to let us see she remembers Pdfr; and then conclude with something handsome and genteel, as "your most humble cumdumble," or, &c.' A favourite subject of raillery is Mrs. Johnson's spelling, which was not her strong point, though she was not nearly as bad as Lady Wentworth. 'Rediculous, madam? I suppose you mean ridiculous. Let me have no more of that; it is the author of the *Atalantis*' spelling. I have

mended it in your letter.' Elsewhere there are lists of her lapses: *bussiness* for business, *immagin*, *merrit*, *phamplets*, &c. But the letters seldom end without their playful greeting to his 'dearest Sirrahs,' his 'dear foolish Rogues,' his 'pretty saucy MD,' and the like. As his mood changes in its intensity they change also. 'Farewell, my dearest lives and delights; I love you better than ever, if possible. . . . God Almighty bless you ever, and make us happy together. I pray for this twice every day, and I hope God will hear my poor, hearty prayers.' In another place it is 'God send poor Ppt her health, and keep MD happy. Farewell, and love Pdfr, who loves MD above all things ten millions of times.' And again, 'Farewell, dearest rogues: I am never happy but when I think or write of MD. I have enough of Courts and ministers, and wish I were at Laracor.' It is to Laracor, with its holly and its cherry trees, and the willow-walk he had planted by the canal he had made, and Stella riding past with Joe 'to the Hill of Bree, and round by Scurlock's Town,' that he turns regretfully when the perfidies of those in power have vexed his soul with the conviction that, for all they 'call him nothing but Jonathan,' he 'can serve everybody but himself.' 'If I had not a spirit naturally cheerful,' he says in his second year of residence, 'I should be very much discontented at a thousand things. Pray God preserve MD's health, and Pdfr's, and that I may live far from the envy and discontent that attends those who are thought to have more favour at Court than they really possess. Love Pdfr, who loves MD above all things.' And then the letter winds off into those cryptic epistolary caresses of which a specimen has been already quoted.

Upon Stella's reputed rival, and Swift's relations with her, the scope of this paper dispenses us from dwelling. Indeed, though Swift's visits to Miss Vanhomrigh's mother are repeatedly referred to, Esther Vanhomrigh herself (from motives which the reader will no doubt interpret according to his personal predilections in the famous *Vanessafrage*) is mentioned but twice or thrice in the entire Journal, and then not by name. But we are of those who hold with Mr. Henry Craik that, whatever the relations in question may have been, they never seriously affected, or even materially interrupted, Swift's life-long attachment to the lady to whom, a year or two later, he was, or was not (according as we elect to side with Sir Walter Scott or Mr. Forster), married by the Bishop of Clogher in the garden of St. Patrick's Deanery. For one thing which is detachable from the network of tittle-tattle and

conjecture encumbering a question already sufficiently perplexed in its origin is that Swift's expressions of esteem and admiration for Stella are as emphatic at the end as at the beginning. Some of those in the Journal have already been reproduced. But his letters during her last lingering illness, and a phrase in the Holyhead diary of 1727, are, if anything, even more poignant in the sincerity of their utterance. 'We have been perfect friends these thirty-five years,' he tells Mr. Worrall, his vicar, of Mrs. Johnson; and he goes on to describe her as one whom he 'most esteemed upon the score of every good quality that can possibly commend a human creature. . . . Ever since I left you my heart has been so sunk that I have not been the same man, nor ever shall be again, but drag on a wretched life, till it shall please God to call me away.' To another correspondent, speaking of Stella's then hourly-expected death, he says, 'As I value life very little, so the poor casual remains of it, after such a loss, would be a burden that I beg God Almighty to enable me to bear; and I think there is not a greater folly than that of entering into too strict and particular a friendship, with the loss of which a man must be absolutely miserable. . . . Besides, this was a person of my own rearing and instructing from childhood who excelled in every good quality that can possibly accomplish a human creature.' The date of this letter is July 1726; but it was not until the beginning of 1728 that the blow came which deprived him of his 'dearest friend.' Then, on a Sunday in January, at eleven at night, he sits down to compile that (in the circumstances) extraordinary 'character' of 'the truest, most virtuous, and valuable friend that I, or perhaps any other person, was ever blessed with.' A few passages from this strange Finis to a strange story, begun while Stella was lying dead, and continued after her funeral (in a room to which he had moved in order to avoid the sight of the light in the church), may be copied here. 'Never,' he says, 'was any of her sex born with better gifts of the mind, or who more improved them by reading and conversation. . . . Her advice was always the best, and with the greatest freedom, mixed with the greatest decency. She had a gracefulness somewhat more than human in every motion, word, and action. Never was so happy a conjunction of civility, freedom, easiness, and sincerity. . . . She never mistook the understanding of others; nor ever said a severe word, but where a much severer was deserved. . . . She never had the least absence of mind in conversation, nor was given to interruption, nor appeared eager to

put in her word, by waiting impatiently till another had done. She spoke in a most agreeable voice, in the plainest words, never hesitating, except out of modesty before new faces, where she was somewhat reserved; nor, among her nearest friends, ever spoke much at a time. . . . Although her knowledge, from books and company, was much more extensive than usually falls to the share of her sex, yet she was so far from making a parade of it that her female visitants, on their first acquaintance, who expected to discover it by what they call hard words and deep discourse, would be sometimes disappointed, and say they found she was like other women. But wise men, through all her modesty, whatever they discoursed on, could easily observe that she understood them very well, by the judgment shown in her observations as well as in her questions.'

In the foregoing retrospect, as in the final *Birthday Poems* to Stella, Swift, it will be gathered, dwells upon the intellectual rather than the physical charms of this celebrated woman. To her mental qualities, indeed, he had always given the foremost place. But Time, in 1728, had long since silvered those locks once 'blacker than a raven,' while years of failing health had sadly altered the perfect figure, and dimmed the lustre of the beautiful eyes. What she had been is not quite easy for a modern admirer to realise from the dubious Delville medallion, or the inadequate engraving by Engleheart of the picture at Ballinter, which forms the frontispiece to Sir William Wilde's deeply interesting *Closing Years of Dean Swift's Life*. The more accurate photogravure of the latter given in Mr. Gerald Moriarty's recent book is much more satisfactory, and so markedly to Esther Johnson's advantage as to suggest the further reproduction of the portrait in some separate and accessible form.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

The Children's Hour.

'Bona nemini hora est, ut non alicui sit mala.'

IT is in the short days when garden pleasures and out-of-door play are still only a blessed memory, 'like friendship and the immortality of the soul, almost too good to be believed in,' that the question of the children's hour becomes a constantly-recurrent difficulty to their mothers. Like most other questions, it is but part of a far larger problem, and when we ask ourselves how we are going to treat it, we are really asking how we mean to face the whole duty of woman, irreconcilable as it would seem to be with much of the pleasure of man. Difficulties for which no solutions are attainable compel us to compromise. There is, we learn, in these days of triumphant earnestness a society which calls itself 'Upwards and Onwards.' If any of its members should by chance read this paper, perhaps they might offer some suggestions to those who are still without a gospel, and help us to reconcile the duties and responsibilities of domestic life with the varied and absorbing social claims and interests which would seem to offer them battle on our very hearthrugs.

How can a woman to whom winter means visits paid or received, and summer a London season broken by Sundays on the river or at some social retreat in Surrey, see anything at all of her children, who already will have begun the long routine of lessons, sleep, food, and exercise, unless when at home she sets aside that precious time between tea and the dressing-gong in which to have them with her? To the newly-married or childless wife the difficulty may appear trifling, almost imaginary; even those who have but small families (a class which of late has largely increased) cannot properly appreciate the situation; nor is it to such that we would offer sympathy or suggestion. Far less to the modern type of mother who, daring 'to despise these little

ones,' thinks the narrow nursery-walls contain all they need to learn of the universe, and believes the society of their nurse ('Really, my dear, a most estimable woman; knows *far* more about the children than I do') to be an excellent substitute for maternal companionship.

This attitude is already somewhat out of date, and were it not so our difficulty would never have arisen. It is the young mother of three or four children, living in London, who finds the problem so hard to solve. Her male friends are mostly busy at their professions all the day, and her fireside should be a quiet haven (spelt with an e) where the tried companion or the shy aspirant may find a chance to repair friendship or to deepen acquaintance which the uncertain conditions of a dinner-party may fail to afford.

Remember, woman, what an effort it is to a man to call upon you! How easily he is deterred! How timidly he confronts the discouraging attitude of the footman, and with what mingled feelings he learns that you *are* at home! It is the natural and hereditary instinct of all males of whatever age to run away after having rung a door-bell; but this instinct conquered by long training, he comes in, and probably finds another visitor before him. If he is of a patient disposition or sufficiently attracted, he waits till his possession is undisputed, but already there will be a sense of injury in his heart. This cannot fail to increase if you say to him, apologetically, 'You won't mind the children, will you? I haven't been near them all day!' and as a patter of feet down the stairs is heard, and three starched white frocks and blue sashes come into the room, peace and hope fly out at the window.

Some mothers of a provident disposition keep a box of coloured chalks or a toy of unusual fascination at hand, and having produced these, the children are admonished to retire into a remote and probably gloomy corner, where they can be seen and not heard, which is another way of saying that they are to play with all the fun left out. The sacrifice of a lawless happiness upstairs, coupled with the trying rites of curling and cleansing which no self-respecting nurse will ever forego, cannot fairly be balanced by the hollow, albeit dignified, joy of coming downstairs to the drawing-room and saying 'How do you do?' nicely to mother's visitor. Neither is the latter really at his ease; the wandering eye of the parent paralyses his best conversational efforts. Besides, one never knows how much these silent children hear and absorb,

and the topics that will most readily occur are too often but ill-suited to the inquiring mind of youth. Even if all goes well, the relief experienced when nurse's summons is heard may be horribly mingled with nervous anticipation in the mind of both mother and guest as to whether Tommy will 'go good' or not. Probably Tommy will not.

There is a class of mother who only desires her children's presence as a picturesque adjunct to herself; she knows how a child at her knee will enhance her own charms in that soft white tea-gown. But let her beware of this temptation. The admiration which the pretty sight may inspire in the guest will be sincere and creditable, but, alas! transient. In less than ten minutes he will begin to pray more fervently than he often does in church for the advent of the nurserymaid; and besides, children brought up on this method are certain to disgrace you sooner or later—generally sooner.

Many women have begged the question entirely by an unswerving devotion to maternal duty. There is a certain censorious ring in the voice that says, 'You know I am never at liberty after tea, as I always make a point of giving up that time to my children.' This mother is not one of those whose door will be very constantly besieged by the disturbing form of man. Her children may have a very good time now, but at the risk of finding later on that their social circle has become irretrievably narrowed, and that the fitful flame of friendship has died out for want of cherishing.

Here we would make a small suggestion specially recommended to the notice of the London mother. Could not a brigade of 'Children's Friends' be formed, with dépôts on the Grosvenor and Cadogan estates, which could be worked on some call-bell system such as the Boy Messengers have adopted? We are always told that there is great dearth of new professional openings for women, and amongst the hundred and eleven thousand virgins of London who cannot hope to possess babes and firesides of their own, there must be many gentle and tactful women who would gladly (for a consideration) answer our summons and leave us free to charm the casual caller.

In the country home the full difficulty of the children's hour is not felt. There is generally some unselfish girl ready to join the noble army of martyrs; she has not quite forgotten yet how to romp and 'pretend' on her own account, and to her the floor does not seem such a long way off as it does to her elders. Or

there is the dear old spinster aunt, whose home-made stories of other and naughtier children hold a nurseryfull entranced. In some country-houses it has been thought possible to combine the amusement of the guest with that of the children, and 'hunt the slipper' was found to offer a most promising *point de réunion*. Hide and seek also, played in the good old-fashioned way, when only two went out together and chose a really remote and inaccessible place, generally in the dark, has afforded much opportunity for genuine enjoyment. Even pencil-games have occasionally solved the difficulty, and have, as ever, provided an interesting opportunity for the study of human nature. The self-conscious child will hesitate to offer itself up, *pro bono publico*, even as its elders, and the mentally indolent will abuse the pastime in unmeasured terms. But if by good luck Dick is a ready rhymer, or Hilda 'has a really wonderful talent for drawing,' there indeed is a chance for the guest! Mete out praise with an unstinting hand; you can hardly say enough; but at the modest expense of truth, and the grown-up competitor's feelings, you may ingratiate yourself with any right-minded young mother in a way you could hardly hope to compass by any other legitimate means; and praise is as good for the young as sunshine for flowers. Remember that the east winds which often prevail in the spring of the year may do irreparable damage.

Yet who does not know and dread the household where the children's claims are obtrusively paramount? where Mary's scales and Gwendolen's violin practice awaken the injured guest to a cheerless dawn; where dear little Teddy endangers the economical cheerfulness of the breakfast-table by his all too-realistic imitation of a railway-train, and where the unbending attitude of Fraülein, and the superior attainments of the rising generation as aggressively displayed at luncheon, make all effort after real social intercourse futile and out of place.

Must we then sit down with folded hands, and, whilst sacrificing the comfort of our friends, fail in the end to benefit our offspring? Indeed we would not neglect our children, or lose the dear possession of their hearts, for the sake of platonic friendships or social successes. Yet, neither would we forfeit the companionship of those who may add interest and pleasure to their young lives, and possibly increase their ultimate chances of success in the difficult art of living. Perhaps the real solution of this question, as of so many others, is to be found in compromise—a solution to which many of the nicest people in the world have to come,

sooner or later, in the three principal relationships of life: marriage, motherhood, friendship. As one thinks of the interesting difficulties which beset the path of all save the unfavoured few, one cannot but feel a furtive sympathy for that human saint who prayed, 'Make me good, dear Lord—but not to-day!' In the spirit, then, of judicious compromise which one of our foremost statesmen has unfairly stigmatised as 'a flaccid latitudinarianism,' let us consider whether we should not best be satisfying conflicting claims by the simple methods of reduction and condensation. It is wonderful how much love, stimulus, criticism, and confidence can be compressed into thirty minutes by a really ardent nature. Will our friends flee our firesides if we listen to the still small voice, or will they unselfishly consent to enliven the Children's *Half-Hour*? Perhaps some contributor to this magazine may in a future number show us some more excellent way; but meantime we must follow the methods of contemporary statesmanship, and, having noted the objections to every alternative, leave it to the wisdom of our readers to suggest a final settlement.

AGNES JEKYLL.

Elsbeth's Holiday.

'NO escape this time!' said old Baron Dornenburg, glaring somewhat savagely at an open letter in his hand. It was a letter from an old schoolfellow, now the representative of Government in a distant province of Austria, and in it the Baron was warmly appealed to on behalf of that schoolfellow's son.

At first sight there was nothing very appalling about this fact, and yet this was the moment which the widowed father of three daughters had been dreading for years.

The men who make successful chaperons are extremely few and far between. A male duenna is either over-scrupulous or over-light in the fulfilment of his duties. The Baron belonged to the former order, to the extent of making life a burden to himself perpetually, and not infrequently to others also. Young girls were treated by him as a dangerous explosive, within a mile of which no match should be struck, for fear of a catastrophe, and so faithful was he to this theory that his friends frequently felt it their duty to reason with him.

'But, Dornenburg, how do you expect ever to get rid of your daughters if you keep them shut up behind gratings?' 'Bless the man, he's surely not going to have three old maids help him into his grave!' Such and such-like remarks flew past his ear, but left him unmoved. A male chaperon is in so far easier to satisfy than a female one, that the latter has no peace until her charge has made a brilliant marriage, whereas the former is content if she has not made a disgraceful one.

When on this September morning Baron Dornenburg had done glaring at his old comrade's letter he reached the same conclusion he had begun with—'No escape this time!' After which he promptly sent for Miss Wilkins.

Miss Wilkins was his youngest daughter's governess—for the Baron still had a daughter in the schoolroom—and she was like-

wise the English instructress of the elder Baronesses. It had cost a hard fight before she had been secured, and peace with her. Being past sixty, and bald and gouty, the Baron had foolishly supposed that he would be unmolested by the fair sex. He very soon recognised his mistake. Various had been the *Fräuleins* and *Mademoiselles* who had passed in procession through the house of Dornenburg, each one of whom would have been ready to overlook both the bald head and the crippled joints for the sake of sharing with him the crown of seven points. Miss Wilkins was not only the oldest and plainest governess he had been able to unearth for love or money, but had something distinctly puritanical about her person, reassuring to anyone with so shaky an opinion of female human nature as had this particular Baron.

'Miss Wilkins,' said Baron Dornenburg, addressing the gaunt, middle-aged Englishwoman as she entered, 'I have had some very unpleasant news. My old friend, Count Kestler, writes to me here, saying that his son Conrad has just returned from his American tour, and is very anxious for some shooting. His own deer-forests have not yet recovered from the disease which infected them two years ago, consequently he appeals to me. I see no escape but to ask Conrad Kestler here for ten days. It is to consult with you as to the precautions to be taken that I have requested your presence here. In the first place—'

'I presume the young man is unmarried?' asked Miss Wilkins abruptly, and a spark of some quite newly-born interest seemed to illumine her usually chilly grey eyes.

'Of course Conrad is unmarried,' confirmed the Baron in some astonishment.

'And the Kestlers' name has a good sound, and the fortune is considerable.' Miss Wilkins was warming to her subject as she spoke. 'Oh, Baron Dornenburg, I do believe that letter from your old friend is nothing but an interposition of Providence! Why, don't you see as clearly as possible that this means a husband for one of your daughters?'

'Hold, there!' said the Baron gruffly, flushing dark red from vexation. 'If ever I believed that any woman could keep her fingers out of the match-making pie, I took you to be that woman, Miss Wilkins, but I do believe you're made of the same stuff as the others. Husband, indeed! Marriage! Count Kestler of Föhrenstein would long ago have fallen a prey to some enterprising Vienna mamma if matrimony had been in his line. I have not seen Conrad since he was a boy, but his fame as a

mangeur de coeurs has long since penetrated even these woodland retreats. I understand him to rank as the most successful lady-killer in Vienna society. In fact, his one vocation in life seems to be to go about turning heads and breaking hearts ; and this is the man who, for ten days, is to dwell under the same roof with my girls—upon my word, it's letting the wolf into the sheep-fold.'

'Very possibly the wolf is not so black as he is painted,' Miss Wilkins cautiously suggested.

'He is blacker, at any rate, far, than he ought to be, and it will require both your vigilance and mine to checkmate the empty-headed love-making with which he is sure to pass his time. I have been turning over the matter in my mind, and have come to the conclusion that during these ten critical days you must be the constant companion of my two elder girls. It is the only possibility of averting the danger that threatens.'

'And Elsbeth ?'

'Let the child have a holiday. It will do her no harm to shut up her books and run wild for ten days.'

Miss Wilkins shook her head, but so entirely were the Baron's thoughts taken up with his elder girls that he never even noticed the disapproving gesture. Elsbeth was a child, still safe in the schoolroom ; the day when she took to long skirts would be time enough to begin worrying about her.

When, at the end of half an hour's private consultation, the gaunt Englishwoman left the Baron's presence, she was primed with warnings, and yet, for all that—so obstinate are some fibres in human nature—the spark of match-making enthusiasm was not utterly quenched in her eye. Silently, but not the less irrevocably, was the middle-aged Englishwoman determined that this opportunity should not be lost. It was with an eye to the main object that she encouraged both Anna and Hélène to pass their wardrobes in review, and made various well-meant, but not over-skilful, attempts in the direction of freshening up tumbled flounces and procuring a new lease of life for hats which had borne the brunt of the summer. During this week of preparation such things as turned ribbons and half-curled feathers belonged to the common features of the apartments, though the approach of the Baron generally caused them to disappear. In their heart of hearts both girls had set upon those ten prospective days hopes which as yet they had not acknowledged even to themselves. Even the domestic virtues, of which both possessed a fair share,

could not blind them to the fact that it was rather hard to be aged respectively twenty and twenty-two without ever having seen the inside of a Vienna drawing-room. Their own gentle resignation filled them with wonder, but, nevertheless, did not prevent occasional meditations being made on the possibility of a husband dropping from the skies. Count Conrad Kestler's proposed visit seemed exactly to answer to that description of event, and was, therefore, duly prepared for.

'Will he be a big or a little man?' was the doubt which slunk in and out of the souls of both Baronesses. The first sight of the stranger would help greatly to clear the situation, for the big Anna could place no hopes on a scrap of a man, while the miniature Hélène would never have the courage to fall in love with a giant. And yet, when the day came and the moment, and when from behind the window-curtains two pairs of blue eyes peeped at the new arrival, nothing like a definite conclusion was come to. Upon an identical impulse, Anna and Hélène looked at each other and laughed. Not a word was said, but they understood each other perfectly. The glance exchanged between the two sisters said as much as: 'I must have another look at him before I make up my mind, but he is certain to do for one of us two.'

This was the conclusion which Miss Wilkins likewise had reached, though she would have greatly preferred if Count Kestler had not been one of those men of indescribable height, whom it would be incorrect to describe as *tall*, and who yet are unquestionably not *short*. So long as the prospective husband was not distinctly assigned to one of her charges she could not feel as though the campaign were opened.

But the first evening passed without betraying to Miss Wilkins anything beyond the fact of Count Kestler being a lady's man in the fullest sense of the word. When he was talking to Anna the watchful Englishwoman felt ready to stake her soul that he had succumbed to that young lady's massive charms, and yet the moment he approached Hélène he appeared to have eyes for nothing but her fairy-like grace. As for the poor over-conscientious Baron, he spent not only the evening, but most of the night upon thorns, tossing about from side to side, and passing in review before his mind's eye all the symptoms of love-sickness which he was convinced of having noted in both his daughters. Had not Anna forgotten to hand round the sugar, and Hélène twice dropped her handkerchief in the course of the evening?

The author of all these cruel anxieties was meanwhile enjoying

a perfectly unbroken night's rest. Owing to a belated butterfly which came sailing in by the open window, having slept through the proper butterfly season and being condemned to make the best of September weather, Count Kestler's morning slumbers came to a somewhat premature conclusion. Had it not been for this tardy butterfly much might have happened differently ; also, whenever in future days his thoughts travelled back to the little yellow-winged creature, Conrad Kestler saw in it a direct instrument of fate, or, at any rate, much more than an ordinary butterfly.

At the moment, however, it must be admitted that the instrument of fate was not greeted by him with all the delight that would have been becoming. Having opened his eyes to see what it was that was tickling his nose, his lips first formed themselves to a mutter—about which, perhaps, the less said the better—and then to a yawn. In the very act of turning over for another snooze his eye was caught by the flash of light upon water, and he rose on his elbow to see the very first sunbeam sliding from between two pine-clad mountain flanks and striking rose-coloured fire from the surface of a good-sized lake.

Unquestionably it was a pretty prospect, and yet it was not so much the prospect itself as the meaning which it bore to him that caused Conrad Kestler to relinquish his idea of another snooze.

'I didn't know they had water here' shot through his mind. 'That means wild ducks.'

And half an hour later the newly-arrived guest might have been observed sallying forth from the still sleeping house, with the intention of having a closer look at that sheet of water which, seen from a distance, seemed to contain such delicious promises of sport. This thought had been the motor of his action, but, once having reached the open-air, he was in danger of forgetting his object, so surprised and pleased was he with what he saw on all sides. Not that the trees at Dornenburg were older or finer than those at his own home, or the flower-beds better kept, or the lawns better tended, but because for years past he had not seen any of those things with the first veil of morning still beautifying them, for which reason he appeared to himself to be discovering them over again. There was something distinctly soothing about this consciousness of being the only member awake of a household ; why, the chances were that not even the kitchen-fire was yet lit, nor was either rake or spade being plied anywhere

within eyesight. No privacy could have been more perfect, no promenade more ideally planned for the purposes of a quiet meditation. So irresistible, in fact, were the accessories, that Conrad had scarcely reached the middle of the lime-tree avenue, which led from the door of the house, when he found himself drifting into a course of serious reflections.

'My father had an object in sending me here, beyond that of shooting wild ducks,' thus ran the current of his thoughts. 'I know he thinks it time for me to settle, and nothing would please him better than for me to marry one of the daughters of his old comrade. Dear old *Vater*! I would please him if I could, but nothing would ever make me content with either a giantess or a pygmy. And it's a pity, too,' he continued, 'for I like golden hair, and both the big and the little face are very pleasantly pink and white, and I suppose it *is* about time for me to be getting settled.'

When he had paced down another bit of the avenue he seemed to remember that his father had spoken about three Dornenburg girls.

'And I have only seen two, as yet,' he reflected, 'which means, I suppose, that the third is in the nursery.'

So deep was he in his meditations that when, at the end of the avenue, he stepped out on the very shore of the lake, he stood still in as much astonishment as though this had not been the object of his walk. At the same moment he became aware that he was, after all, not the only member of the household on his legs. In a boat chained to a pole at the edge of the water there stood a girl with a straw hat shading her face, and her back turned to him, while she busied herself with the fastening.

Conrad's first impression was one of annoyance at the interruption of his privacy, his second was the question, 'Who can this be?' Both the hair and what he could see of the curve of the cheek seemed to be of the right colour, and yet it did not appear to him to be either quite the big or quite the little Dornenburg girl.

At this moment she straightened herself and turned round, evidently despairing of the chain. Perhaps it was owing to his thoughts having been occupied with the question of feminine stature that Conrad was now aware of a distinct feeling of satisfaction, for there could be no doubt about this apparition being of the 'right height,' just as there could be no doubt about its being the youngest Dornenburg girl.

'Let me help you with that chain,' said Conrad, stepping forward, much relieved by the discovery that the young boat-woman's skirts were not quite regulation length, which was enough, with one blow, to banish etiquette from the scene. 'I fancy I know that sort of fastening. But first let me introduce myself. I am—'

'I know who you are quite as well as you know yourself,' she briskly interrupted him. 'Why, the house has been positively alive with your name since this time last week. I never thought I could get so tired of any person before seeing him.'

'You don't say so! I really was not prepared—' stammered Conrad, whose habit it was not to be easily taken aback, but who, nevertheless, felt rather at a loss for words wherewith to answer this unexpected address. 'I was not aware of having cast so huge a shadow before me. There, the chain is undone; and now, unless you have irrevocably made up your mind to solitude, perhaps you will allow me to row you out on the lake?'

She looked at him critically, as though turning over the proposition in her mind, but ended by acquiescing.

'I want some of those bulrushes over there,' she remarked when they had pushed off from the shore. 'And you can help me to gather them if you like; so perhaps, after all, it was a piece of good luck that brought you out walking so early, though I didn't think so at first sight. I had been looking forward to having the whole lake to myself, and was greatly bothered by seeing you.'

'If I am to be quite honest,' said Conrad, showing his even, white teeth, 'I must confess to having likewise felt far from delighted at the first moment of our meeting. After all, it is only human nature to bear a grudge against the person whose appearance on the scene brings us down a peg in our own estimation, by proving to us that we are not the only individual about.'

'You are describing exactly what I felt,' remarked the girl with grave approval. 'I do believe I hated you at first sight.'

'That sounds as though your virtue were as spasmodic as mine, and I were mistaken in counting you among that chosen tribe known as early risers.'

'That depends upon what I have got to get up for. Surely nobody in their senses would hurry out of bed on account of lessons, while, again, it's a pity to waste a bit of a holiday asleep. By the by, how many days are you going to stay here?'

'I believe the Baron is going to let me stay till the 16th.'

'Couldn't you make it a little longer? I am sure you could manage to trail out your visit to the 20th, at least, if you tried.'

'I really don't exactly know——' said Conrad, in renewed astonishment.

'You are surprised at my asking you to stay, after having told you that I hated you at first sight. The explanation is really very simple. You see,' and here the childish face settled into an expression of preternatural seriousness, 'as long as you are here I am sure of my holidays; therefore it stands to reason that I want you to stay as long as you possibly can.'

'As long as I am here!' Conrad smiled a smile of puzzled amusement. 'This is really very interesting. I was not aware I had reached the stage of holidays being given in my honour.'

'As far as I can make out it's not in your honour exactly, but as a sort of defence against you. By the by, you are sure to be able to tell me what a *lady-killer* is. I want very much to know.'

'Why am I so sure to be able to tell you?'

'Because I heard papa saying to Miss Wilkins—he has been having long talks with her almost every day for the last week—that she must keep her eyes well open, because the visitor he expected was a dangerous lady-killer. And it is in order to leave her plenty of liberty for opening her eyes that my lessons have been stopped, and that for the time of your stay she has transformed herself from a governess into a kind of——'

'Gooseberry,' completed Conrad, with an amused chuckle. 'Come, this raises me enormously in my own estimation; I had no idea I was so irresistible as all this.'

'Then being a lady-killer means being irresistible, does it? It is one of those things I suppose I ought to know by this time, considering that I was seventeen last month.'

'Were you really?' asked Conrad, in genuine astonishment. 'I would never have guessed more than fifteen.'

'That's all thanks to these ridiculous short skirts,' she retorted, flushing scarlet from vexation. 'It always costs papa a tremendous pang to acknowledge any of us grown-up. That's one of the reasons why I've always got to take my meals in the schoolroom when there's a guest in the house. Oh, not so quick! Here we are at the bulrushes!'

'Do you think it would make the boat sink if I took them all?' she asked at the end of ten minutes, during which both she and Conrad had been hard at work, and in the course of which

she had gradually rid herself of hat, gloves, and jacket. Her light golden hair was powdered with feathery morsels of reeds, and her blue eyes were shining with intense enjoyment.

'It looks rather like it; but must we have them all at once? Is there any reason why we should not return for a second or a third helping?'

'No, only that you will be going out shooting after breakfast.'

'But there are other days before the 16th.'

'So there are. And if papa *should* ask you to stay beyond the 16th, please remember what I told you about my lessons. Let me see; how could you manage to convey to me that the matter is settled? It will be best, I think, if we invent some sort of sign.'

'This is ripening into a conspiracy,' said Conrad, in increasing amusement. 'I had no idea what I was letting myself in for when I turned out of bed this morning. But for fear you should indulge in empty dreams of holidays to come, perhaps I had better tell you at once that my father expects me home on the 16th.'

She heaved a sigh of disappointment, but added at once, philosophically:

'Well, all I can do is to make the most of the ten days I have got before me, though I know quite well that I shall never be able to get through all the bramble and bilberry hunts I have planned, nor to collect half the mushrooms I have got my eye upon. This is the very best season for holidays, you see.'

'If you consider me worthy of the post,' said Conrad, slipping, as he spoke, almost unconsciously into the tone of gallantry he generally adopted towards women, 'I should be most happy to act as adjutant; of course, only under the supposition,' and here his eyes twinkled mischievously, 'that you have no objections to the company of a lady-killer.'

'Why should I have an objection? I suppose a lady-killer can only become dangerous for a full-grown lady, and I am not that yet, as papa is never tired of telling me.'

Once more Conrad felt almost foolish. The straight gaze of those cloudless, blue eyes was enough to make the practised man of the world feel as though he had been attempting a sacrilege.

It was just after they had parted on the shore of the lake that Count Kestler heard his name very earnestly pronounced, and became aware that the young boatwoman was hurrying after him.

'Do think of it again!' she said rather breathlessly. 'I mean

about the 16th ; and if it is possible, please—*please* stay a little longer.'

With the last words she had turned again, and in the same moment disappeared among the bushes. Conrad could hear the twigs snapping to the right and to the left after he had lost sight of her.

It was not until he had got back to the house that he suddenly remembered the wild ducks, and, very much to his astonishment, realised that, as far as knowing whether there were any to be hoped for on the lake, he had come back exactly as wise as he had started.

Breakfast was scarcely over when the battered green hat of the old gamekeeper was seen to pass the window, whereupon Conrad became a sportsman again, and, leaving his second cup of coffee untouched, hurried away for his gun.

As, for the second time that day, he made his way down the lime avenue, he could not help wondering why he had not mentioned his matutinal excursion in the boat ; and the only conclusion he could come to was that a touch of mystery never fails to give a charm to the most commonplace adventure, and that the idea of a plot between himself and the youngest Baroness, whom he understood to be called Elsbeth, had tickled his fancy.

Meanwhile the old Baron had established himself in his arm-chair with a heartfelt sigh of relief. For the next few hours, at least, he might relax his vigilance, seeing that the dreaded individual was safely disposed of.

But a rude shock awaited the Baron's peace of mind that evening, when the conversation at the supper-table acquainted him with the fact that Anna and Hélène's afternoon walk had, strangely enough, taken the same direction as Conrad Kestler's shooting excursion, whether through a provoking coincidence or owing to some culpable negligence of Miss Wilkins, who had been of the party, it was difficult to ascertain. Never before had the Baron so acutely felt the inconvenience of being gouty. With the free use of his joints half his anxieties would have been relieved, for as long as he could be the constant companion of his dangerous guest it was pretty certain that all serious peril could be averted, while, alas ! what incalculable harm might not be brought about by a few undisturbed encounters in the romantic shadow of the pine-woods ?

To add to his anxieties, the cloudless September weather seemed bent upon tempting the girls to extend their daily

promenades far beyond their normal length. From breakfast to dinner and from dinner to supper the Baron was generally alone at home—for Elsbeth made the most of her holidays by running wild in her own company—and passed his time in fuming at his enforced inactivity and counting the days till Count Kestler's departure.

Gradually, however, he became aware, somewhat to his own annoyance, that the feelings with which he was looking forward to the 16th were not feelings of unmixed pleasure. Conrad might be a lady-killer of the first water, whose path was strewn with broken hearts much as the seashore is strewn with broken shells, but that did not prevent his voice and his laugh and something in the irresistible sparkle of his eye carrying back the Baron very vividly in memory to the days when his old comrade had been young. It was with a pleasant feeling of surprise, too, that he noted another circumstance in connection with his guest. Conrad evidently was no lie-a-bed. On two different occasions the old gentleman had caught sight of Count Kestler sallying forth from the house at an hour when the housemaids should indeed have been astir, but were not, and he regularly appeared late for breakfast, with hair wet by dew, and not infrequently with fragments of grass or a red or yellow leaf clinging to his coat. The Baron began to admit that there must, after all, be some good in the man. An individual who found pleasure in such simple country enjoyments as a walk before breakfast could not be entirely corrupted by the wickedness of town life.

Miss Wilkins, on her side, was much pleased by the discovery that a point which for long had been a rather sore one between herself and her pupil had shaped itself according to her own wishes.

‘Your cheeks are twice as pink as usual and your eyes twice as blue,’ she said approvingly on meeting Elsbeth in the passage one morning laden with autumn crocuses. ‘That is the result of early hours.’

‘Or of holidays,’ said Elsbeth promptly.

‘Can you explain to me how it comes about that you require so much less sleep during holidays than on lesson days? I don’t know of any bribe by which I could have got you out of bed before seven o’clock, so long as books and atlases were in sight.’

Elsbeth smiled happily and almost a little guiltily, but attempted no explanation, and listened with a quite unusual patience to the wholesome remarks on the subject of early rising with which Miss Wilkins considered it her duty to improve the occasion.

Neither did Anna and Hélène entirely escape ; but these two young ladies submitted quite passively to having their younger sister held up to them as an example of good conduct, and got out of bed no earlier next day. As long as there was a guest in the house it was obviously expedient to keep oneself fresh for the evening hours by lying late in the morning.

It was on the fifth day of Conrad's stay that the Baron, when parting with him for the night, remarked approvingly :—

‘ I see you are as faithful a cultivator of morning hours as your father used to be, but I fear your walk to-morrow is likely to turn into a shower-bath.’

Conrad looked somewhat taken aback, and having reached the privacy of his room he flung himself into a chair and began to review the situation.

‘ That looks like being watched’—thus ran the course of his reflections. ‘ The old man is just bristling with suspicions. Is there any way, I wonder, to put him off the scent ? ’

He sat for some minutes, gnawing his moustache and frowning at the carpet, but presently his brow cleared and he laughed aloud in the way a man laughs whose fancy is tickled by some specially good joke.

‘ That will do it ! ’ he decided as he rose to go to bed.

The Baron's prophecy concerning the weather proved correct, and it was with a somewhat rueful face that Conrad looked through the streaming pane next morning. And yet, upon reflection, he had to admit that in one way a rainy day fitted into his plans almost better than a fair one would have done.

Breakfast being over he promptly proposed a game of billiards, which was enthusiastically accepted by the young ladies, and for the perils of which the Baron saw no remedy but to take a cue himself. The forenoon hours were fraught with severe trials for this conscientious father. While hobbling round the table as well as his gouty knees would allow him, it was little short of agony to note the soft glances which Conrad Kestler distributed pretty equally between the two girls, and to have to listen to the playful remarks—full of veiled meanings, as it seemed to him—of which Conrad's conversation was chiefly composed. It must be the *ennui* of a rainy day which was inducing the lady-killer to bring out all his resources, for the Baron had never seen him in such force as to-day.

Nor was the afternoon an improvement on the forenoon, except for a couple of hours, during which the host succeeded in luring

his guest into the smoking-room. The rules of hospitality would not allow of his being kept there by main force, and thus it came about that on each of the visits of inspection he paid to the drawing-room the Baron suffered great distress. The first time it was the sight of Conrad sitting on a footstool and holding a skein of sky-blue wool that was being wound by Anna which gave him a shock, while the second time this same Conrad turning over the pages of Hélène's music considerably aggravated his state of mind. Fine weather was, after all, greatly preferable to rainy weather, was the conclusion with which he went to bed.

Next day was not much better. The sportsman, indeed, went out after breakfast, the barometer having risen, but a heavy shower brought him back in the middle of the forenoon, and though it cleared off soon, he showed no inclination to sally forth a second time. Something was said about a twisted ankle, and as here, again, main force could not be called to aid, there was nothing for it but to stand at the window and grind his teeth as he watched Conrad pacing the garden-path beside his eldest daughter. He stood it fairly well until a pause was made beside a bush of late roses, but when Conrad in full sight of his window broke off a pink rose, and with an exquisite bow handed it to his companion, the Baron sent for Miss Wilkins and commanded her to invent some excuse for summoning Anna to the house.

Miss Wilkins obeyed, with the result that when next the Baron looked out of the window Hélène was sitting on a garden-bench straight opposite, in lively conversation with Count Kestler, and with one of the same late roses blooming in her waistband.

'Only three more days till the 16th!' was the only thought to which the poor harassed father could turn for comfort.

When in due course of time the 16th arrived, the sun rose once more dazzling and cloudless, exactly as it had done on the first days of Conrad's visit, and exactly as on the first day he stole down the staircase of the sleeping house and along the lime avenue which led to the shores of the lake. His portmanteau was packed and his wraps strapped up, for the carriage had been ordered directly after breakfast. To judge from the expression of perplexity and indecision which sat on his face his impending journey did not fill him with any special delight. Exactly as on that first day he was plunged so deeply in meditation that he came to an astonished standstill on finding himself on the edge of the water, and exactly as on that first day the boat was chained to the shore, only that this time Elsbeth sat in it with hands lying inactive in

her lap, and blue eyes that seemed to have been impatiently watching the avenue. A new and happy smile brightened Conrad's face; instinctively he raised his head. The sight of that childish figure seemed to have solved some doubt that had been pursuing him.

It was not until they were some distance from the shore that Elsbeth said, a little unsteadily, 'So this is really the end of my holiday?'

Conrad looked straight into her face, still with that shadow of a happy smile hovering about his lips.

'That depends upon whether or not you are anxious to prolong it.'

'How can it depend upon myself?' she asked as defiantly as she could.

'Do you not remember once before asking me to stay beyond the 16th? You said, "Please, *please*," then, and I said "No"; but if you were to say, "Please, *please*," a second time, I would have no choice but to say "Yes," and after that don't you think that your holidays would begin for good and all?'

'I don't believe I said it,' retorted Elsbeth, growing furiously scarlet.

'Think again.'

She thought again, and the eyes which had been attempting to stare defiance sunk suddenly before his gaze.

'Well,' asked Conrad, 'is my visit to be prolonged or not?'

'No,' she answered breathlessly, while her pulses throbbed in expectation of something which she both longed for and dreaded without quite understanding what it was, 'I cannot say it a second time.'

'And if I stay without being asked? Tell me, Elsbeth,' and, letting slip one of the oars, Conrad bent forward and possessed himself instead of one of the small ungloved hands that lay in her lap.

It was exactly at this most unfortunate juncture that Miss Wilkins, who had happened to select to-day for putting into practice her theory of early rising, stepped out from a side-path on to the shore of the lake.

Neither of the occupants of the boat observed her, but for a full minute the Englishwoman, who was *not* short-sighted, stood rooted to the spot; then she rubbed her eyes and looked again, and finally she turned decisively on her heel, like a person who has come to a resolution, and hurried back towards the house.

Though Miss Wilkins was both an Englishwoman and a governess she was not a prude, but the scene she had just witnessed had played the part of that well-known last straw to which the camel's back is so apt to succumb. So long as she had seen in Conrad a prospective husband for one of her marriageable charges she had had eyes for none but his good qualities; but now that he had proved a failure from the matrimonial point of view she had suddenly become alive to his defects. It so happened that during the early part of her promenade thoughts of bitter disappointment had already been busying her with the departing guest, and then had come that vision on the lake.

Evidently the Baron was quite right. Thus she told herself as she hastened towards the house. A man who indulged in such objectless pastimes as this could be no more than a heartless libertine.

The Baron was in his dressing-gown when he was told that Miss Wilkins wished to speak to him immediately. It was with a hairbrush in one hand and a razor in the other that he came forth to grant the interview. He listened in silence to the governess's tale, but she knew by the look that came over his only partially shaved face that this was the limit of his patience more decisively even than of hers.

'I am almost sorry the young scamp is going to-day,' he remarked between his teeth, 'so that I shall not have the satisfaction of turning him out of doors.'

Five minutes later the dressing-gown had been exchanged for a morning-coat, the more pressing defects of toilet remedied, and the Baron, still with a half-shaved chin and with a look of ill-suppressed fury making him alarming to behold, hobbled out once more into the passage.

Scarcely two paces from his door he barely saved himself from running against Conrad Kestler, who seemed in as great a hurry as himself.

'The very man I want!' he burst out, glaring at his guest. 'Will you please step in here, Count Kestler; I have a word to say to you!'

'Now then,' he began, when Conrad had followed him into the room, 'I know that you are leaving my house to-day—fortunately, I cannot help adding—but nevertheless I consider it my duty as a father to demand an explanation of your conduct. It is bad enough to flirt barefacedly with grown-up women, but let me tell you that a man who takes pleasure in turning the

heads of children in short frocks should keep clear of respectable houses.'

He paused, almost snorting with indignation, but no answer came. The young man stood looking past him at the window, with a light on his face which the Baron did not remember having seen there before, and apparently not listening.

'Have you anything to say in excuse?' asked the old gentleman in a more subdued tone, struck, in spite of himself, by the other's look.

'I have only this to say, that when you met me in the passage just now I was on my way to propose for your daughter's hand.'

The Baron's jaw dropped.

'My daughter?' he stammered after a moment of stupefaction. 'Her hand? I don't understand. Do you mean Anna or Hélène? You cannot have them both, you know,' he added grimly.

'Thanks; I don't want either. It is your youngest daughter whom I hope to make my wife.'

'But my youngest daughter is Elsbeth.'

'And it is Elsbeth whom I want to marry.'

This time the Baron required a longer pause. Without taking his eyes from Conrad's face he put out his hand and felt his way backwards to the armchair, where he sat staring for a full minute.

'Young man, is this a joke?' he sternly inquired at last, and being told that it was the most unimpeachable earnest, he added: 'but Elsbeth is in the schoolroom; she is in short skirts; she—'

'Will be eighteen on her next birthday,' completed Conrad.

Baron Dornenburg went through a rapid mental calculation.

'Bless my heart! So she will.'

'And do you know of any valid reason why a woman of eighteen should not either wear long skirts or marry a man of twenty-eight?'

'Well, no, I suppose not,' said the Baron, still in a tone of helpless bewilderment.

'And in consideration of my being the son of your old friend, do you not think—'

'I—I think nothing at all just now; I know nothing. The matter must be considered. I must talk to Miss Wilkins.'

Miss Wilkins was talked to, with the result that Anna and Hélène, while standing at the drawing-room window after breakfast, were greatly surprised to see the carriage that had come round to the door sent back again to the stables. They did not

know whether to be pleased or provoked. Without either of them having gone through the process known as losing one's heart, they had for the last few days been feeling puzzled and vaguely jealous of each other, which was an uncomfortable sensation. On the whole they had been glad that the guest was going. And now this delay—what could it mean?

By the evening of this same day they knew what the delay meant, having learnt, with as much astonishment as genuine delight, that though, at present, no husband was in store for either of them, Providence had assigned to them a prospective brother.

And that was the end of Elsbeth's holiday.

DOROTHEA GERARD.

The Study of Weather and of Climate.

SOME of our readers may be interested to learn in what way the study of weather and of climate is really carried on in these islands. It seems to be the general impression that these are the sole business of the Meteorological Office, but such is not at all the case. The office was established for the study of Ocean Meteorology, and to that subject a large proportion of its energy is continually directed.

In the present paper it is proposed to treat of the study of weather and of climate, and in the prosecution of that we employ, in the first instance, the fully-equipped observatories, of which four are in direct connection with the office—two in England (Kew and Falmouth), and one each in Scotland and Ireland respectively (Aberdeen and Valencia).

At all of these stations a continuous register is maintained. The barometer and thermometers record themselves by photography, lamps or gas being kept continually alight in dark-boxes. Sensitised photographic paper is kept stretched on a drum moved by clockwork, and a spot of light from the lamp strikes on the paper and travels up and down as the mercury in the instrument rises and falls, photographing itself as it moves. The only attention these instruments require is to wind the clocks, trim the lamps, and change the papers at regular intervals.

The wind and the rain record themselves mechanically, for in both cases there is abundant mechanical force available. The wind, as it can turn a windmill, can easily be made to move a pencil on paper; and the rain, by its weight, can also do work. The rain is collected in a vessel which is floating in mercury, and which sinks as it fills, drawing down a pencil with it, and tracing a line on prepared paper. As soon as the vessel is full it empties itself, and then, with the pencil, rises again to the top of the scale to begin the round again. The only attention these instru-

ments require is the winding the clocks and changing the papers. The sunshine records itself by charring paper, and here no clock is required, as the sun marks its own time.

In addition to the four observatories named, in these islands there are others, either partially assisted by the Council or else entirely independent of it, like Greenwich.

The location of these observatories has been fixed by considerations other than purely scientific. The ideal situation of such an establishment would be in the centre of a plain, where there should be no hill to divert the wind and no tree to interfere with the fall of rain, or cast a shadow so as to interrupt the passage of the scanty rays of sunshine which are all that visit the surface of these islands. To maintain four continuous observatories entirely at the cost of the office would be too expensive, and consequently there is only one such in existence. In the other three cases the office has taken advantage of the presence of some local centre of scientific activity, and has subsidised an observatory in connection therewith.

The observatory dependent solely on the office is Valencia, on the extreme west coast of Ireland. Here the geographical position has been the chief motive in the selection of the site. As it is on the west coast, it need scarcely be said that it is in a hilly district, so that the winds felt there are more or less affected by the trend of the valleys. Any locality which is really well exposed on the Atlantic coasts of Ireland or Scotland is almost uninhabitable owing to the violence of the wind. The geographical importance of the situation of Valencia, as the extreme western outpost of the old continent, renders the records obtained from it indispensable to anyone studying weather over the whole of Europe. The reports from Valencia are telegraphed far and wide, even off to St. Petersburg, as soon as ever they reach London.

Falmouth, the next station to be noticed, is at the entrance of the English Channel. There is no actual hill anywhere near the town, so that the winds are reasonably true, except that, as the land rises rapidly from the sea on one side and from the harbour on the other, the course of the air reaching the anemometer is not quite free from interference.

Aberdeen Observatory is at King's College, in Old Aberdeen, and is therefore more or less in a town. This town lies in a perfectly level tract of country, intersected only by the two river-valleys of the Dee and the Don. The nearest hills of any altitude are at the distance of several miles, so that the wind has fair access from all quarters.

The last station, and the most important, as it is the central one, is the Kew Observatory. This is not at Kew, but at Richmond, in the Old Deer Park. It is situated in the river-meadows, and so is occasionally surrounded by water when these are flooded. This position brings the building very much under the influence of river fogs. As regards the wind, Kew is the most inland of the four observatories, and such is the influence of this situation that the wind never attains the force of what would be called a really severe gale on the coast. A velocity of fifty miles an hour is hardly ever recorded at Kew, while velocities exceeding eighty miles have occasionally been registered at some of the coast stations.

The information obtained from these observatories is not employed for the preparation of the daily reports which appear in the newspapers, for the photographic records must all be developed and measured before they can be utilised. This necessarily takes time, so that the figures cannot be transmitted by telegraph.

The continuity of the observations, however, makes them invaluable. To take a single instance: in the cases of collisions at sea, where, when the case comes into court, cross-swearers is the rule, the evidence afforded by an automatic instrument is absolutely conclusive as to what the direction and force of the wind really were at the moment of the collision.

It will be seen from what has been said, that none of these observatories enjoys a perfectly unexceptionable situation; and if we now come to consider the telegraphic reporting stations, we shall find that they too suffer under disadvantages, and that the observers are handicapped by the peculiar circumstances of their localities. In some places the country is so hilly that no true wind can be felt, and at others, even though nominally on the coast, no view of the sea is obtainable.

At all of these stations instrumental observations of the barometer, thermometers (dry and wet), and of the rain-gauge, are made, and non-instrumental ones of the wind and of the state of the sky and sea. A few stations are supplied with automatic aneroids, to show what changes in pressure occur during the intervals between the regular observations. Some stations have sunshine-recorders, and one or two are provided with anemometers.

These stations must all be connected with London by telegraph, and so the office has to follow the extension of the telegraph lines to the coast. These lines naturally go to towns, and not to headlands, so that at more than one point the end of

the telegraph line is not on the actual coast, and the observer stationed at it cannot get a sight of the open sea.

This last-named condition is the case at Belmullet in Mayo, at the head of Blacksod Bay; at Stornoway, lying some miles back from the open Minch; and, to a less extent, at Aberdeen and North Shields also, where in thick weather the reporter can hardly form any judgment as to the state of the sea, as the open water is more than a mile distant from the spot where the observations are taken.

Some of the localities are exceptionally favourable, as, for instance, Malin Head, where the station, established by Lloyd's, is in an old watch-tower on a small hill, rising directly from the shore, on the extreme north coast of Ireland, and the observer has an open view of the sea for more than half round the compass. Mullaghmore, in the county of Sligo, offers nearly as favourable a situation, for it is on a headland jutting out into Donegal Bay, which at the spot is nearly ten miles wide, while the view to the west and north-west is over the open Atlantic.

We have already said that Belmullet is at the head of a land-locked bay, but as for wind the place is freely exposed. The land of the Mullet itself is low to the west of the station, and to the eastward lie the bogs of Erris, over which the wind can sweep as it will. There is no high land within five or six miles of the town.

We have thus described our most important stations, those on the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland, for it is from that side that intelligence of storms most frequently reaches us, as storms generally move from west to east, or at least from some westerly point to an easterly.

The western stations are supplemented by some fifty others, scattered over the British Isles and the adjacent parts of the Continent; the most extreme places being Corunna and Lisbon in the south-west, Nice and Toulon (Cap Sicié) in the south, and Haparanda (Torneö) and Bodö in the north. From all these stations, fifty-nine in number, telegrams come in, or ought to come in, every morning, and out of these messages the maps are compiled, from the study of which the forecasts are prepared thrice a day and the storm warnings are issued when necessary.

In addition to the morning messages, arriving before 10 A.M., there are also messages arriving in the afternoon, and again after 6 P.M., from a certain number of the stations. From the last-named reports the remarks and forecasts are prepared late at night which appear in the morning newspapers.

66 THE STUDY OF WEATHER AND OF CLIMATE.

On Sundays the service must be specially arranged, for the telegraph lines are open for only an hour or two in the morning. In order to save as much as possible of this precious time the Post Office authorities allow the clerks of the Meteorological Office to attend at St. Martin's-le-Grand, so that, when necessary, warnings may be sent out directly from the central telegraph office, so as to reach the coasts before the telegraph wires are closed for the day.

To do all this work requires the attendance of more than a dozen persons, including boys and messengers to take the printed forecasts and the lithographed weather maps to subscribers in the various streets. The seniors of the staff are obliged to work in alternate weeks for twelve hours each, as, in order to deal intelligently with the evening reports, which are comparatively scanty in number, it is necessary that the forecaster shall have clearly in his head the conditions revealed by the fuller reports of the morning.

The telegraphic branch of the office is, however, charged with other duties than the preparation of maps and forecasts. It also draws up a Weekly Weather Report, intended for sanitary and agricultural purposes, which shows, week by week, how the seasons go on; how the temperature, the rain, and the sunshine have been distributed over the British Isles during the period; how that distribution differs from its average in each case; and, moreover, what is the total of each of these elements which has been accumulated since the beginning of January in that particular year, and how that total differs in excess or defect from the average amount for the time of year.

These reports are of great interest if studied regularly, week by week, and they at once, by the dry proof of figures, show the progress of the seasons in each year, and afford the farmer some facts on which to base his judgment of the prospects of his harvest.

So much for the materials available for and the care devoted to weather study in these islands. We must now conclude our paper with a notice of what is being done in the domain of climatology. In order to show the difference between these two lines of investigation, we may say that climatology is prosecuted by determining, the average conditions of the various meteorological elements for each place from observations made continuously at that place at the same hours of local time; in these islands

usually 9 A.M. and 9 P.M. Weather is studied by comparing the different observations reported for the same epoch of Greenwich time from a number of different places.

We have already mentioned the four observatories, the records from which are mainly of use in climatological inquiry. In this branch of investigation they are supplemented by reports from a large number of stations scattered over the country. These latter are entirely maintained by volunteer observers, and they numbered forty-eight in 1891. Of these, the greater proportion belonged to either of the two Societies—the Royal Meteorological or the Scottish Meteorological.

The records from these stations come in monthly, not daily, and though they are published in the form of tables only, which are always more or less tardy in their appearance, and are certainly dry reading, they furnish really important information.

From observations furnished by stations like these, supplemented copiously by returns from many of Mr. Symons's rain stations, the office is now preparing tables to show the average rainfall over the United Kingdom for the decade 1881–90, being in continuation of its previous similar publication, referring to the fifteen years, 1866–80. These tables will be of very great value to engineers.

It may be interesting to give some idea of the confidence which is apparently placed in the office by the public, and of the practical use which is made of its supposed universal knowledge. At one time we were asked officially to define twilight—a purely astronomical question! At another time an old lady wrote to consult the office as to the advisability of her giving up a cabin she had taken in a steamer for New Zealand, because, forsooth, a gentleman in Canada had prophesied for March in that particular year a storm of such fury that no ship on the Atlantic could live. Of course the office endeavoured to set the old lady's mind at rest, and equally of course the predicted storm never came off.

Hardly a week passes that some inquiry as to the climate of some part of the United Kingdom does not come in, such as a request for information as to the greatest cold to be expected in a definite locality, or whether ladies would be likely to catch cold at such and such a seaside place. At times the questions have to do with litigation. We were asked if the wind was strong enough on a certain day to blow down a ladder and injure a passer-by. We were once consulted about a truckload of watercresses sent to

68 *THE STUDY OF WEATHER AND OF CLIMATE.*

Paris and damaged by frost *en route*. And the question was, whether carelessness could be brought home to any railway official.

The very latest question we have received was as extraordinary as any. It was an inquiry as to the weather in October between Anjer Point in the Sunda Straits, and Hiogo in Japan, as a ship was reported missing between these two points. The very latest detailed information which has reached us from the China Seas is up to Midsummer, three months before the missing ship passed through Sunda Straits. We must only suppose that our inquirers imagined that the office was in daily telegraphic communication with all parts of the habitable world.

ROBERT H. SCOTT.

Character from Handwriting.

LET me preface these remarks on this subject by observing to sceptics that my jay has no wish to strut before them in the borrowed plumes of the peacock. I do not claim a niche in the temple of science for my *protégé*. Its highest flight, its wildest hopes, do not go beyond attempting to provide some amusement for a spare half-hour, some diversion for an invalid. On these humble lines, perhaps, its existence may be justified and criticism disarmed. At the same time, it will be my endeavour to prove that graphology does not, as so many people suppose, consist merely in making random shots more or less good.

To begin at the very beginning. Take a family of children, three or four of them taught by the same teacher ; at the age of fifteen each child will have developed a 'hand' of its own, possibly having a general likeness, but to a graphologist full of differences. The impulsive, headstrong, good-natured child will (if these are its *ruling* characteristics) elect to write with a quill pen, making thick black downstrokes and long dashes ; while the neat, tidy, unimaginative child chooses a steel pen, forms its letters with care, and dots its i's and crosses its t's with precision. It dislikes the blotchy untidy look the quill pen produces, which the other child prefers because it gets over the ground quicker. The third child may be yielding, patient, and unselfish—when it takes any pen that may be left, writes a round, sloping hand, with faint crosses to the t's, or perhaps none at all. Surely this is character.

Place aux dames. As later on I shall have no opportunity of commenting upon the handwriting of women, I will make a few remarks upon it here.

It will, I think, be generally admitted that the women of the present day are much more independent, less conventional, less content to run in a groove than they used to be : they, especially

girls, have more liberty and freedom, both of speech and action, than was the case forty years ago, and we find that their handwriting shows a corresponding change. Our grandmothers and mothers wrote (I am speaking of the average woman) small, pointed, sloping, 'ladylike' hands ; the flourishes were there—when were women without vanity?—but the writing was usually delicate, refined, almost timid-looking, if one may so express it : that was its general appearance. Nowadays the handwriting of the modern young woman has an individuality of its own ; it follows no rule, is guided by nothing but her own taste, her own will. She is independent, can take care of herself, is headstrong and wilful—then her writing is large and black, upright, or slopes the wrong way, the downstrokes are thick, the crosses to the 't's heavy and long. She possesses self-esteem and love of effect—the capitals have big heads out of proportion to the rest of the letters ; if they are, notwithstanding their size, well shaped, there is artistic feeling ; but unless the writing shows intellectual tastes and culture as well, the artistic capacity will confine itself to taste in dress, love of pretty clothes, furniture, nice surroundings, &c. The same letters may be formed in different ways—then she likes change, variety, excitement. The writing looks easy, dashed off as it were—then she is vivacious, amusing, possibly even brilliant. The signature is often *huge*, with a flourish underneath—then we have vanity, love of admiration, and frequently originality. Refinement, gentleness, and conventionality are often absent, all three qualities being almost always found in the writing of bygone 'ladies of quality.' A glance over the pages of an autograph or 'Visitors' book in a country-house will, I think, convince my readers of the truth of this description of the writing of the average *fin-de-siècle* young lady. That she is more practical and more 'knowing,' possesses more originality and courage than did her ancestors, is undeniable ; and, in addition to this, of course all the higher qualities and virtues are frequently to be found. I am here merely drawing attention to the change in the writing, and giving reasons for that change.

There is much common-sense in the rules of graphology, nothing fanciful or far-fetched. One can easily see the force of the reasoning that a man with a good opinion of himself and much self-confidence should write a large, bold hand, an indolent man a round, easy-looking one, and an active, energetic, and irritable man an angular and pointed one ; the eloquent or talkative person makes big loops to his tall letters, the taciturn and

secretive one none at all. The difficulty in reading off a character lies in the fact that natures are complex: some qualities apparently contradict each other—for instance, signs of impulse and of caution are frequently found in the same writing. Then it is necessary to look which of these two qualities predominates; should it be the former, we may infer that the writer is *naturally* impulsive, but has *acquired* caution; and so with other qualities, one adds them up as, it were, and then takes the average. Again, many qualities are compound—if sensitiveness, egotism, and imagination are all shown, the writer will be ‘touchy,’ apt to take offence easily, and, with impulse added, most likely jealous also. The general look of a writing tells a great deal; but no rules can be given for this, only practice will teach what it betrays.

In a short article like this it is impossible to enumerate all the signs. In order to illustrate the theory I will take some specimens of the writing of well-known men, delineate their character, and give reasons for each quality as I find it. I may add that in none of the letters have I seen the signatures or addresses, as these were entirely concealed when the letters were kindly placed at my disposal. In the cases, however, of Charles Dickens and Tom Moore, I guessed who the writers were, and in the case of Earl Russell I discovered whose letter it was when the character was all but finished. In no other case had I any idea whose the handwriting was; I merely knew that none of the writers were living.

I.

THE FIRST DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

This is a very well-balanced character, no qualities much in excess of others. By the letters being all the same size, and the lines equidistant and straight, we know he was a man of strict honour and integrity, truthful, downright and straightforward, conscientious, with keen sense of duty. The height of the tall letters shows pride and self-confidence, but neither is excessive. The sloping writing gives unselfishness and affection, though by its not being at all black, I should say he was not a demonstrative man. In the clearness of the words we see practical common-sense, in the brevity of the finals economy and the habit of wasting nothing, not even words; here and there letters are left out, when the meaning is equally clear without them. Signs are not wanting of imagination in the loops to his long letters, and the

Sheffield 1st
July 16 1843

July 16 1843

The Duke of Wellington requests
that Mr. Bathurst will have bought
for him at the Sotheby Auction
of the Library of the late Major
Wellington by Messrs. Coopers 1st & 2nd of July
the following Numbers in the
Catalogue

Just off Lake Geneva
No 12 of Knobhead
No 13 of Knobhead
101

152

199

200

These will be with us to post
day Tuesday the 1st

look of movement in the writing. He had good deductive judgment and sequence of ideas by his *words* being so frequently joined one to another, and observation by some of the *letters* standing alone. The shortness of the 'q,' the 'f,' and the 'p,' in 'requests,' 'for,' and 'complete,' show reticence, power of keeping his own counsel. The slightly ascending tendency of the whole writing shows courage and hope; this more accentuated would give ambition. It has lost the vigour of youth, but activity of mind and energy are shown by the pointed *tops* to the letters and the look of movement in the writing. The rounded letters give benevolence and a kind heart; but by the crosses to his 't's' going downwards, in things which interested him his will was extremely strong, persistent and stern, almost despotic. The absence of any flourishes and the correct form of the capitals show simplicity of taste, no vanity, no love of show. By the hook at the end of his 'y's' he possessed great fixity of purpose; this, with his very strong will, must have made him most difficult to turn from any course he had decided upon. The letters being usually wide apart show independence and pluck; but here and there they are close together, which gives prudence. The absence of heavy black downstrokes betokens refinement; he had no love for material pleasures, and was independent of luxury and comfort. The harmonious look of the writing in the last two lines shows him to have been courteous, gentlemanly, and accustomed to society—there was nothing mean or small about him; and his individuality must have been unusually strong, approaching originality, by the uncommon look the whole writing possesses. There are other smaller details visible, but we will pass on to the next specimen.

II.

CHARLES DICKENS.

The characteristics most prominent here are imagination first and foremost, literary taste, and artistic feeling. Vivid imagination, by the look of movement, the indistinctness here and there, the loops and 'running' look of the whole writing; literary taste, by its smallness and cultivation; artistic feeling, by the beauty of the capitals—in the T and L especially. The loops to the tall letters show him to have been a talkative man—fluent in speech and rapid in thought, easy to get on with, possessing many ideas, and, by the varying height of the letters, versatility of mind and tact.

The letters being isolated here and there shows observation, idealism, or creative power; the dots to the 'i' not being strictly over the letter gives impressionability, also, in this kind of hand,

Gads Hill Place,
Higham by Rochester, Kent,
5 Hyde Park Place W
Wednesday evening Second February
1870

Dear Longman

On referring to my
Reader's list, I find that my people
were wrong just now. The two remaining
nights on which the Pickwick Trial
is to be read, are Tuesday March 1st
and Tuesday March 15th.

Yours faithfully
Mark H. H. H.

Mark H. H. H.

taste for literature. The lines of the writing going downwards
shows despondency and melancholy—one could fancy he had
fits of 'the blues' very often. His artistic perception would
give him a keen eye for beauty; by the blackness of the

writing, especially for colour, scenery, pictures, &c. The pointed termination to his 'y' shows perception and penetration, and he had deductive judgment; these together give critical power. The long letters, being mostly without any return stroke, only a thickening at the end, give obstinacy, but as he did not always cross his 't's' we will simply call it determination. He was very affectionate, tender-hearted, and unselfish, fond of children or animals, by the round, sloping writing and its blackness. The R in Readings shows self-esteem, by the upper curve being so much larger than the lower. He had some sense of humour, by the way many of the finals fly up (as in Trial, people); was sometimes restless, by the opposite way some of the letters slope. The writing is small, neat, and precise, he paid strict attention to punctuation, therefore he was fond of detail, liked 'finish' in his work. In a writing of this description a great deal depends upon the signature, which I have not seen.

III.

LORD MACAULAY.

Here we have a man of great refinement. The smallness of the writing indicates intellectual and literary tastes. The indistinct way in which some of the words end shows diplomacy, finesse, absence of candour, but the lines of the writing being straight, he was not untruthful; he possessed reticence, as seen by the shortness of the 'y's' and 'g's.' The curious form of the double 't' in attack gives originality, the separate letters idealism and observation; their pointed tops, penetration and perception and shrewdness. The capital 'I,' self-confidence and esteem by the size of the head. The angular look and hooked terminations of some of the letters show love of argument. The curves here and there indicate an eye for *form*; but as none of the capitals visible are very artistic, seeing by the loops to the tall letters that he was eloquent and imaginative, we should say this love for form takes the shape of paying attention to style in language, both *speaking* and *writing*. The first stroke of the letter 'M' in 'Mr.' being much higher than the second, is a sign of ambition, liking to excel, also of pride. He was careful of money, but generous, by the length of the finals here and there, and the margin left on the paper. Words are far apart—typical of clearness of thought, lucidity of ideas. The sloping writing, without much roundness,

A. Bailey April 16
1845

Dear Mr. Chapman,

I am truly sorry
that this interminable
debate will prevent me
from having the pleasure of
dinner with you. Having
made an attack on the
ministers, I must on
decency be present when
they reply. But

Yours very truly
A. Bailey

gives sensitiveness ; he was not *indifferent* to people's opinion of him, though his strong will, coupled with his courage, would enable him to remain uninfluenced by it. Culture, good taste and judgment, varied interests, attention to detail, and brilliancy are all present, the latter shown by the easy-flowing writing and curves, with the perception and the eloquence.

IV.

TOM MOORE.

Stephen
Chapman

Nov 4 1842

Thank you, my dear Longman

I took for granted that your silence
meant consent, but I had a letter after
I wrote from Dow saying that he would
not be able to come as soon as he had
expected.

Our poor Dauphile has had a
rally within these two or three days that
again tempts us to hope.

I should like to know how your
mother is - Mrs Moore often thinks of her
with much interest and sympathy - Pray re-
member us to her most kindly

Yours truly
Thomas Moore

Here the leading features are, again, imagination, great artistic feeling, and keen sense of humour, almost amounting to wit. The signs of the first two I have already shown. Wit is indicated by the finals all flying up in a curve. It is not the writing of a young man. He was extremely cultivated, disliking anything vulgar in mind: the refined, well-formed characters show this. The crosses to the 't's' flying up here and there indicate sensitive temper, and this is also shown in the return line of the long letters being carried on to the next letter. His spirits varied very much, (but were more often good), by the lines of the writing going, some up, some down. The elegance of the curves betokens delicacy of taste, a graceful nature and gentleness, more common in women than in men, but there is no effeminacy—music, poetry, and a sense of beauty in everything is rather the idea it gives. Idealism (creative power) is present. Hospitality and generosity are indicated by the length of the finals and the round writing. Perception and penetration are present. A little egotism, by the inward curve at the beginning of many of the small letters, but no vanity; unless this shows itself in the signature, he was essentially a modest man. He was neat and orderly in mental things, and attentive to detail, by the precise writing and correct punctuation, and was pains-taking. Was honourable and truthful, but would never hurt people's feelings; had tact, shown by the letters being, though perfectly distinct, of different heights. Music is shown by the sloping writing and large loops to the long letters, and poetry by the same, with the highly-intellectual look of the writing and the artistic form of the letters. The writing is uncommon, which indicates individuality.

V.

SIR EDWIN LANDSEER.

By this time my readers will have discovered for themselves that the qualities belonging to the human race are limited in number. It is impossible to avoid repetition in analysing several characters, especially when, as in this case, the writings are all of an intellectual nature.

No. 5 shows a vivid, almost uncontrolled, imagination, also enthusiasm and ardour; all these by the blackness of the writing, the immense curves and loops, and its whole look of 'go.' It expresses much more artistic (and musical) taste than any of the

others. Some of the curves of the letters are beautiful, though they show vanity and love of pleasing or admiration by being here and there carried to excess, and sometimes superfluous. There is

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Longman
A thousand thanks for your
kind hand. Very much
regret to day approves
engagement - presents
my sincere pleasure
of coming with you

Parcine one

Liniford
Sandace.

also love of effect, shown by the constant flourishes, twirls and dashes. By the long, flying, arched crosses to the 't's' impulse is shown, and by egotism, imagination, and vanity all being present, he would very possibly be jealous. But in the case of an artist (or a musician) all these qualities, owing to their being more emotional, are almost necessary evils, or virtues! He was brilliant rather than solid, clever, very agreeable and taking, sociable, and a charming companion; all this the general look of the writing betrays, but it is difficult to give reasons for this *tout ensemble*. His taste is not uniformly good. The capital B in 'Believe,' though showing originality, is not a very harmonious letter, nor is the S in 'Sincerely.' He had very much self-confidence and self-esteem, knew the extent of his own powers, and therefore seldom failed in what he undertook. The round, sloping writing shows him to have been extremely affectionate, kind-hearted, and very good-natured. By the absence of crosses to his 't's' here and there, and with his impulsive nature, he was sometimes 'carried away,' I should fancy. Fond of children and animals, by the blackness of the writing and its roundness. Much influenced by beauty, especially of colour. Without being fickle, he liked change, and his interests were many and varied—shown by the different ways in which he formed the same letters; and he possessed great versatility. He was easy-going and of a careless disposition, thoroughly appreciated comfort and luxury and the efforts of a *chef*, and was much influenced by his surroundings; liked to have pretty things and people about him. In fact, his nature was thoroughly artistic. He had sequence of ideas and was very sensitive.

VI.

THE FIRST EARL RUSSELL.

This is, again, the writing of a man no longer young. The angular form of all the letters, the hooks to the long letters, the crosses to the 't's' flying upwards, and the sloping writing, all show quick temper and irritability. The turned-in loops to the small letters give strong egotism; he would be very sensitive to ridicule, very apt to lose his temper, and his 'cuteness, quickness of thought (by the square finals), would make it easy for him to make incisive and bitter remarks. Not a pleasant enemy. There are signs of diplomatic skill by the way the letters glide into each

other, and great caution is evident by the line after 'pamphlet' and 'parliament' instead of a full stop. He must have been a man of great perseverance by the hooked termination to the crosses of his 't's,' obstinate by the ends of his 'y's,' ambitious by the ascendant tendency of the whole writing. The height of the

Pembroke Lodge
Nov 18. 30

This great
disturbance in the last
of Europe has made our
dear son but to add to
the troubles of the Ministers
by my pamphlet - I
wish to support it, & to
know what I have to
say for permission -
I then wish to be
finished by the printer, &

back up for my prints
way I should be glad to
have them. The other
copies may be destroyed
I wish also you would
inform your son that
I do not wish them
to keep the copies of
my original address -
I quite forgot all about it.
But if they have
any copy of my
previous letter

beforehand, I wish to have
copies for my friends
distribution — There ^{being} ~~is~~
no or there to much

Yours truly

Russell

If you have no copy of my
interview, I will send ~~hurly~~
Russell's to ~~first from~~

capitals and the tall letters shows pride ; from the compressed look of the writing, and from his possessing egotism strongly marked, I should say it was pride of rank or position. Not a man to stand having liberties taken with him. His opinions were very strong, also his prejudices ; by the uncomfortable look of the writing he would be fastidious, and not at all easy to please. A very active mind, and much energy, by the angular form of almost every letter. He had insight and penetration, intuitive judgment and keen observation (for reasons for these *vide supra*), but would, I think, sometimes be blinded by prejudice. Cultivation and refinement are both present ; also, in some degree, originality and imagination. He was more accustomed to command than to obey. When he had once set his mind upon a thing he would never desist until he had obtained it.

Having, I think, given reasons for almost every quality under the sun in the foregoing specimens, I will proceed differently

with the last letter. I will delineate the character straight through, and leave my readers to discover the signs for themselves, unless I find any qualities not hitherto mentioned.

VII.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.



Jan 13 19, Cavendish Street, W.

dear W Longman

The spies could
not have brought
more luminous
news from the
promised land itself

F. d. Longman

J

I can sympathise with
you in parting from
such a vineyard!

My offer to Mrs
Langman my thanks
for joining in this
gracious gift

Yours sincerely
Beaconsfield.

The writing of a refined, cultivated, well-bred man of the world, who possesses much *savoir faire*, tact, and, I should say, very good manners. His taste is good; he likes beauty in every form; is accustomed to ease, luxury, and comfort; but he has much intellectual capacity, literary taste, sense of humour, vivid imagination, with strong individuality, though perhaps not quite

reaching originality. He is very affectionate, kind-hearted, and benevolent, rather impressionable, and his will is not strong, *except* in such things as interest him, but he is more accustomed to rule than to obey. He has much 'class' or family pride, but is neither stiff nor arrogant. Has taste for music and art. Rather of an indolent nature. A very pleasant, amusing companion, eloquent and talkative. He has sequence of ideas and deductive judgment, a clear head. Is something of a scholar; has a leaning towards the classics and poetry, though he possesses also much practical common-sense; is extravagant, and fond of popularity, and possibly has some vanity (but this may show itself more in the signature, which I have not seen). He is good-tempered on the whole, very self-possessed, and plucky. Can be sarcastic, and has much shrewdness and a good memory. Likes effect, has *great* tenacity of purpose.

The above delineation can, I think, be verified in every particular. Practice has made me familiar with many trifles shown in the general tenor of a writing, rules for which cannot be put into words. Of course, the last description brings the man before you, as it were, better than any of the others; it is better arranged, and there is nothing to distract the attention from the 'summing up.'

In all the specimens given, high intellectual powers and culture have been the leading characteristics. And, naturally, such natures are easier, in one way, to 'dissect' than those of ordinary men, because they have more in them; on the other hand, their very cultivation prevents their faults being as prominently shown as they sometimes are in less gifted mortals; or do they possess fewer? Cultivation *should* certainly have the effect of eradicating faults. There are many details necessarily omitted in the above short sketch on graphology, but enough has, perhaps, been said to prove that there really is 'something in it,' and to convince some of my readers that if 'words were given us to conceal our thoughts, type-writers were invented to save our characters!'

MILDRED BOYNTON.

At the Sign of the Ship.

IN turning over a drawerful of manuscripts, the bequest (alas ! the only one) of a man of letters, I have discovered the text of a little treatise called '*The Practical Joke*, a Manual for Families, Schools, and General Society.' The author begins by a disquisition on Wit and Humour, which is not unlike other treatises on the same topics. He inclines to the belief that humour cannot be taught except in what he styles its primitive or practical form. All the delight of laughter, he says with Hobbes, arises from a sudden sense of superiority on our own part, and this sense is peculiarly gratified by the Practical Joke. This being within the reach of all, however stupid and senseless, he considers that, in a democratic age, he will benefit society who elucidates whatever is most obvious to the most ordinary intelligence. For this purpose he writes the Manual from which we now borrow a few extracts.

* * *

In a manual intended for the use of families and of the young, it seems well to commence with the simplest forms of practical joke, gradually advancing to the more difficult, complex, and expensive. Nothing can well be simpler than merely to pinch or cuff a younger brother or sister ; here all depends on the moment selected for the joke, and, as is always the case with humour, in the *unexpectedness* of the assault. Practical jokes began in nothing more elaborate than this. To draw away a chair as a person is about to sit down upon it causes great mirth. The heavier and the older the patient, the more acute is the enjoyment of the spectators, and the pain inflicted is proportionately severe. At the same time, the older and more respected the patient, the greater is the unexpectedness—a point on which we cannot too much insist,

The Common Bam or Hoax.

The principle underlying the Common Hoax is of great antiquity and universality. The joke lies in making a statement at once inconsistent with veracity, and calculated to produce terror or disappointment. The young humorist may practise this form of wit almost as soon as he has learnt the use of language. Thus we may tell a younger brother or sister that :

There is a lion in the garden.

A giant is coming up the road.

Either of these jokes may produce great dread, and cause an infinity of pain, which is highly ridiculous, as there is no real ground for alarm.

Disappointment.

This may be simply and almost infallibly produced by the assertion that 'There is a present waiting for you in the dining-room, Tommy !'

1. There may be no present.

2. It may be of an inexpensive and undesirable character, say half a brick, neatly wrapped up in brown paper.

This may also be practised on older people. Take the case that Captain X. is engaged to your sister Jane. You may observe, 'Jane is in the parlour.' When the Captain finds that she is not there you may say 'Sold again!' Much point may be added by locking the parlour door on the outside and running away. When once the principle of this joke is mastered it will be found capable of endless modifications, and, indeed, it lies at the bottom of perhaps half the practical jokes known to science.¹

* * *

EASY JOKES FOR FAMILIES.

The Booby Trap.—The simplest form of Booby Trap is to leave the door of any person's room ajar, and to balance above it any heavy object, so that when the door is opened the weight will fall on the head of the person who enters.

(1) The object may be a large book, the more handsomely bound the better. When it falls, even if it does not hurt the person who enters (or booby), at all events the binding will probably be damaged.

(2) A jar of water may be used. This may not only wet but

¹ See 'Practical Jokes for Ladies.'

severely wound the booby. This plan is recommended for use in schools.

(3) Young ladies, if they adopt this joke, are recommended to fasten the water-can by a string to a nail in the lintel, so that the water only, and not the water-vessel, may descend on the head of the booby. In this case he may actually be gratified by the sprightly delicacy of the attention, which proves that he holds a place in the mind of the fair joker.¹

String Booby Trap.—Fasten a string across the entrance of the booby's room, placing, at a proper distance within, a tub full of cold water, or a collection of valuable china. In the latter case, the booby may cut himself, and will certainly break the china. If he be a guest in the house, this will cause him the keenest annoyance, which is very comic.

Chair Booby Traps.—The simplest plan, as already stated, is merely to pull the chair away. But many prefer—

(1) To stick the chair full of pins, with the sharp ends upwards.

(2) To spread the chair with cobbler's wax, or any other glutinous substance. This is recommended for use on schoolmasters, as it is not always easy to detect the humorist, and the wrong boy may be punished. Inconvenience attends this ludicrous circumstance if he be a big boy.

* * *

JOKES ON PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

To Produce Scarlet Fever.—This is a useful joke at the end of the holidays. One night you allege that you have a sore throat. On the following morning you beat yourself all over with the bristly side of a hairbrush. A capital 'rash' is thus produced. Doctors have been taken in by this joke.

The Spirit-rapping Joke.—This requires audacity and acuteness. Raps may be produced by cracking the knuckles, or by simple knocking with the end of a pencil.

To Move a Table.—Tie a short flat board under each wrist, so that the boards are hidden by the sleeves. A table may thus be raised into the air while the fingers are lightly touching the top; the edge of the table is caught in the boards. Two humorists, at least, are needed for this purpose. A clever boy has been

¹ See 'Practical Jokes for Ladies.'

known to deceive his family for a whole year by the spirit-rapping joke, causing infinite discredit and vexation.¹

An Easy Joke.—Fill a parent's or guardian's snuff-box with cayenne pepper.

Another Way.—Introduce gunpowder into his cigarettes.

Another Way.—Unload his cartridges, substituting sawdust for gunpowder.

Another Way.—Fill the joints of his fishing-rod with mud.

Another Way.—Put hard brushes in his riding-boots.

Joke on a Mother.—Put a rat in her work-basket.

Another Way.—Put a toad.

Telegraphic Joke.—Keep sending nonsense messages to any parent or guardian who lives at a long distance from a telegraph office.

* * *

Medical Joke.—If a booby is ordered a seidlitz powder, induce him to take the two component powders successively. This may very nearly kill him, and his convulsions are richly entertaining.

Convivial Joke.—Put the whisky in the sherry decanter. The results of this joke are often highly diverting.

Hotel Joke.—Change all the boots outside the bedroom doors.

Another Way.—Tell some booby that you have done this, and induce him or her to try to correct the error. If detected, the booby may incur great discredit, as of course you did *not* change the boots, and he or she does so. This joke may be played on a favourite maiden aunt.

* * *

Jokes with Beds.—(1) The simplest joke is merely to introduce foreign bodies, as a basket of fish, hairbrushes, needles, boot-jacks, a pailful of water.

(2) *The Common Apple-pie Bed*.—No joke is more antiquated and respected than this: Tuck up half the lower sheet behind the pillow, and pin or sew it in.² Foreign bodies may also be introduced.

(3) Hide the pillow.

* * *

Practical Jokes on Tradesmen.—Many practical jokes may be played on tradesmen. Even the youngest humorist may enter a baker's shop and, with an air of modest ignorance, inquire what may be the price of a penny bun.

¹ See 'Ghosts, How to Make.'

² See 'Jokes for Ladies.'

Jokes with Tradesmen's Signs.—To remove the signs of tradesmen, placing that of an undertaker over an apothecary's shop, has always been thought excellent fun. A little practice and reflection will suggest endless varieties in this joke. It is well to be provided with a ladder.

Joke with Door-knockers and Bell-handles.—There are various forms of this joke. One is to ring or knock and run away. Another is to wrench off the bell-handle or knocker. This was at one time a very favourite joke, but is now rather out of fashion.

The Higher Jokes on Tradesmen.—These usually require some expenditure of money, and are almost beyond the reach of the young humorist. The fundamental idea is that of informing the tradesman that his wares are wanted by persons who have no use for them. Thus, to have pianos sent to an institution for the dumb, or cradles to maiden ladies, or a complete set of Knur and Spell to an archbishop, is the kind of joke by which reputations have been made. In this branch of humour much depends on quantity. Thus, a thousand cradles are a thousand times as funny as a single cradle. Mr. Theodore Hook attained the greatest celebrity by a joke of this kind; he was occupied three days in preparing it. We read that 'the old lady on whom he played this joke was in abject terror'—a most amusing circumstance. But, as we remarked, this joke needs money to supply paper and postage stamps. It is not, therefore, recommended to beginners as a model, though they cannot reflect too earnestly on the outline, the general conception, and the gratifying results. To throw an old lady into abject terror is an end for which we should grudge neither trouble nor expense. The neophyte, however, may do a great deal by merely crying 'Boo!' at unexpected moments and in unlikely places.

* * *

JOKES WITH GHOSTS.

These are very much recommended, as they have often ended in the death or madness of the booby. When we reflect that there was, in fact, nothing to be afraid of, the ludicrously tickling nature of this joke can hardly be exaggerated.

An Easy Way.—The early wag can scarcely do better, if he has a nervous brother or sister, than hide under the bed, or in a cupboard, and utter hollow groans. Here no expensive and troublesome machinery is required.

Another Way.—Procure a pair of stilts, wrap yourself up in a white sheet, and walk along the passages in the dark. The stilts should be shod with felt, so as to make no noise.

Turnip Ghost.—Hollow out a turnip, cut a face on the outside, insert a candle, cover with white sheet, and erect at a corner of a lonely lane.

An Elaborate Ghost.—Cut a tall figure in flowing drapery out of sheet iron. Paint it white. Erect it at edge of a wood in the dusk. As the spectator advances slowly turn the edge of the figure towards him, when it will seem to vanish. This plan is recommended by Sir Walter Scott.

* * *

MILITARY JOKES.

The beauty of military jokes is their perfect safety. The whole regiment combines to play them on one booby. As duelling is not an institution in the English army, the booby is utterly helpless, which greatly contributes to the humorous effect.

Easy Military Jokes.—(1) Catch your booby, strip him naked, and paint him green.

(2) Go into the booby's rooms, and pile up all his furniture in a heap, taking care to break as much of it as possible.

(3) Drag your booby out of bed and through a horse-pond.

(4) If your booby goes away on leave, send all his furniture after him.

N.B.—These jokes may also be played in *some* colleges.

* * *

JOKE WITH A COLLEGE TUTOR.

Screw him up in his rooms. This is done with long screws, which can be obtained from any ironmonger at Oxford or Cambridge.

Another Joke.—Put some rats in his rooms.

* * *

JOKES FOR LADIES.

The Hat Race.—Having procured the hats of men staying in the house, insert your feet into them, and so run a hat-race, on the well-known principle of the sack-race.

The Rooster Joke.—Get a common barn-door cock. Fasten

him up under the bed of a guest. In the morning he will crow, thereby wakening your friend, and probably keeping him awake.

Most jokes for ladies are played in the bedrooms of gentlemen, giving occasion for a great deal of innocent diversion. Thus—

Tooth-powder Joke.—You may spill his tooth-powder over his hair-brushes.

Boots Joke.—Fill his boots with water, or with ants. This is an old Covenanting joke, which used to be played by the Covenanters on the tyrannical Episcopalian curates. It is a mistake to say that Presbyterians have no sense of humour.

The Proposal Joke.—If you see signs of affection between a gentleman and lady, forge a letter from him proposing to her. Whether she accepts or refuses, this is a most mirth-provoking waggery. It needs some skill in counterfeiting handwriting.

The Caller's Joke.—When you go to pay a call on an acquaintance whose servant does not know you, announce yourself as somebody else, perhaps a leader of fashion, a distinguished lady author, or a very dear friend who is at a distance. This is simple and very effective; the disappointment caused is vastly ludicrous.

* * *

SCIENTIFIC JOKES.

'Jokes of this sort are very prevalent among scientific men,' says the Rev. J. G. Wood. This gives us a high opinion of the sense and humour of men of science. 'They are as playful as so many kittens.' On this point, however, we need a scientific contributor. The author, having consulted a Professor of Chemistry, learns that chemical jokes are not adapted for general use.

* * *

GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

The humorist has now before him a small collection of examples, consecrated by age, and endeared to the young, the gay, and the highly-placed in social circles. By a little thought and ingenuity, innumerable variations may be introduced, and a gentleman or lady may acquire vast popularity and an enjoyable reputation as a wit. The biographies of Theodore Hook and Mr. Sothern the actor may also be studied with advantage by those who cherish the ambition, so natural to all, of shining in society.

It has been thought needless to remark that the weak, the old, the very young, and the unpopular are the best butts, and boobies, whose collaboration is so necessary, indeed essential, to the practical joker. If he be not very rich, well-born, and muscular, the humorist must remember that a sleepless caution and wariness are of the highest importance for success. Sudden and violent deaths have been the result of neglecting this important counsel.

* * *

SONG.

O gin I were a sodger lad, a blythe lad I would be,
Or if a sailor I'd been bred, right weel I'd like the sea ;
But oh ! this weary wark in toun, it is nae wark for men—
I canna thole the three-legg'd stool, I canna bide the pen.

My faither is a country chield, he ca's the cairt and pleugh,
He labours baith in farm and field, as I full fain would do ;
Abune his head the lavrock sings, the caller air blaws free,
But he is auld, his heart's grown cauld, and little heed takes he.

It's little pleasure folk can win when once they're auld and dune,
And siller comes but slowly in, it's lang or fortune's won ;
For wealth comes but wi' toil and care, and care sune turns us grey ;
Then haste ye, lads, to do and dare, and taste life while ye may !

ANDREW LANG.

